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**DURHAM UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION**

**PH.D. THESIS**

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**THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS IN MODERNITY:  
THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX AND  
WILLIAM J. SEYMOUR COMPARED**



**JAMES B. KNUTSEN**  
**2007**

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Abstract

**THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS IN MODERNITY:  
THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX AND WILLIAM J. SEYMOUR COMPARED**

By: James B. Knutsen

Holiness has fascinated, plagued and mystified the Church for nearly two millennia. One of the most significant controversies on this theme is the issue of cultural influence. With this in mind, I have selected two contemporary figures from very different cultural backgrounds for modern-day comparison and contrast in this matter: Thèrese of Lisieux and William J. Seymour. While both lived near the turn of the last century, they came from vastly dissimilar cultural milieus: Thèrese from the Republican Monarchist conflict of late nineteenth-century France and Seymour from the post-Civil War racism of American history. Yet, with all of their differences, each strove with utmost diligence to pursue a holy life. This thesis will demonstrate the elements of holiness that are supra-cultural by highlighting the commonalities of these two innovative thinkers and will also illustrate important elements of distinction between them. Both faced a critical cultural dilemma in their day – in America, racism; in France, class division – therefore it is essential to portray the manner in which each overcame, or attempted to overcome, his or her cultural hurdle. Despite societal limitations, they were nonetheless able to offer fresh insights on holiness in their respective settings.

In addition, it will be demonstrated that a common historical element exists in the tradition of our key figures which stems from the influence of *The Imitation of Christ*. It will be illustrated how the traditions of holiness described in this famous devotional by Thomas à Kempis were, directly or indirectly, influential in the lives of these individuals. Consequently, one will be able to observe that the two greatest revival movements of the twentieth century share a familiar connection as regards holiness; namely, the writings of a fifteenth-century Roman Catholic monk. The influence of Thomas à Kempis in combination with the cultural influences of Thèrese of Lisieux's and William J. Seymour's respective settings brings new insight to this vital subject.

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Finally, this work is dedicated to my wife Dawn without whose constant support and encouragement it, most likely, would never have been completed. My daughter Natalie also encouraged me and without complaint made more pleasant the many hours of research. I would also like to thank my parents for a lifetime of support – always believing and always hoping for the best.

# ABBREVIATIONS

AoG = Assemblies of God

*Apostolic Faith* = Nobel, E. Myron, Ed. *Like as of Fire: Newspapers from the Azusa Street World Wide Revival*. A Reprint of *The Apostolic Faith* (1906-1908). Washington, D.C.: Middle Atlantic Regional Press, 1994.

Bartleman, (1925) = *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles, As it was in the Beginning*. Los Angeles, Frank Bartleman, 1925. This was reprinted in the book: *Witness to Pentecost: The Life of Frank Bartleman*. New York, Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985.

CCR = Catholic Charismatic Renewal

COGIC = Church of God in Christ

*Conférence du Centenaire* = *Thérèse de Lisieux: Conférence du Centenaire 1873-1973*. Paris: L'Institute Catholique de Paris, 1973.

*Edition Critique* = *Nouvelle Edition du Centenaire, Edition Critique des Œuvres Complètes*.

*Histoire D'Une Ame*, NEC, 1898 = *Sainte Thérèse de L'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face. Nouvelle Edition du Centenaire, Edition Critique des Œuvres Complètes (Textes et Dernières Paroles) De Sainte Thérèse De L'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face La Première « Histoire D'Une Ame » de 1898*.

NEC = *Nouvelle Edition du Centenaire*.

*Œuvres Complètes* = St. Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face. *Œuvres Complètes*. Paris: Les Editions Desclée De Brouwer et les Editions du Cerf, 2004.

PAoW = Pentecostal Assemblies of the World

PCCNA = Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America

PFNA = Pentecostal Fellowship of North America

WPC = World Pentecostal Conference



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# CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

## I. BASIC QUESTIONS

Throughout the past two millennia, holiness has remained a central theme of the Church. While one may argue that the average Christian, whether modern-day or historical, is, in reality, more concerned with the personal benefits of the Christian life than the pursuit of a holy life, holiness is nonetheless a topic which is thoroughly grounded in both Christian tradition and scripture. More importantly, there exists a biblical mandate for those who follow after God to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16). The question, then, is, how can one live a holy life? Or perhaps better, what are the aspects or attributes of a holy life? For a Roman Catholic, this raises the issue of sanctity, that is, what makes a saint?

William Thompson, quoting Lawrence Cunningham, provides a broad answer: "A saint is a person so grasped by a religious vision that it becomes central to his or her life in a way that radically changes the person and leads others to glimpse the value of that vision."<sup>1</sup> From Woodward one gains another definition, that of Hans Urs von Balthasar: "No one is so much himself as the saint who disposes himself to God's plan for which he is prepared to surrender his whole being, body, soul and spirit."<sup>2</sup> Yet another explanation from Karl Rahner refers specifically to the saints canonised by the Church: "They are the initiators and the creative models of the holiness which happens to be right for, and is the task of, their particular age. They create a new style; they prove that a certain form of life and activity is really a genuine possibility; they show experimentally that one can be a Christian even in 'this' way; they make such a type of person believable as a Christian type."<sup>3</sup>

Whose point of view is most accurate? Is it Cunningham in suggesting that a saint is one who is "grasped by a religious vision," or von Balthasar in his view of "surrender" to God? Is Rahner on track with a view that the canonised saints individually define holiness by presenting a new "style" and "form of life" that can become a new "type"? How should a Protestant respond to Roman Catholic traditions of sanctity? For Thérèse of Lisieux, for example, what was her motivation in desiring to become a saint? For all who wonder, what does a holy person look like?

---

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence C. Cunningham, *The Meaning of Saints* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 65, cited by William M. Thompson, *Fire and Light: The Saints and Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, cited in William M. Thompson, *Fire & Light: The Saints and Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 10.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Rahner, S.J., *The Practice of Faith: A Handbook of Contemporary Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 157, cited in Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 224.



The challenge in responding to such matters is to address every individual's limited, or at least restricted to some degree, cultural perspective of his native setting, since to remove oneself from the influences of one's culture is extremely difficult. For this reason, I have chosen to examine two individuals who are dissimilar—one could even call them opposites—in their views of holiness: Thérèse of Lisieux and William J. Seymour. Their differences stem from their religious origins, two distinct branches of the Church, Roman Catholic and Pentecostal. Yet, they are similar in their deep commitment to a holy life. In comparing their common and diverse themes, surrounded by diverging points of view and unexpected parallels, we can learn much about holiness. The primary goal of this thesis is therefore to observe how holiness intersected in the lives of these two modern revival initiators.

It is equally critical to view Thérèse and Seymour in their proper cultural setting. One example of the importance of this is the significance of purgatory in nineteenth-century France. For Thérèse, the existence of purgatory was very real and although she possibly questioned its existence later in life, it was, culturally-speaking, part of the fabric of nineteenth-century French Catholicism. These cultural differences are more obvious when one compares first- and twenty-first-century personages; they are more subtle between two modern figures from the first world.

It is important to remember that this is a study of the cultural traditions of holiness, not doctrine and not even scripture. Although scripture played a significant role in the lives of Thérèse of Lisieux and William J. Seymour, one's interpretation of scripture is culturally conditioned. Space does not permit a full discussion of the scriptural or doctrinal implications of each issue. That said, doctrine is often part of one's cultural perspective, as in the previous example of purgatory, and may be noted as to how it influences culture and thus holiness.

Part I of this study examines the changing ideals of holiness as illustrated in the life of Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897). In order to fully appreciate this, one must first understand the historical and cultural context that created the setting for her life by means of a review of French culture in the nineteenth century, focusing on social and religious elements, in particular, and how they related to French Catholic holiness or piety.

Part II examines the same issues in the life of William J. Seymour (1870-1922) and the Pentecostal movement as it related to his life and views. Although less space will be spent here, the American cultural and religious setting of the nineteenth century must also be examined to understand Seymour in context.

Because of the basic familiarity in England as regards the history of John Wesley, and because of the close relationship between the Holiness movement and Pentecostalism, it will be assumed that the reader is familiar with the historical and cultural setting of American Protestantism. For this reason, more time will be given to developing the historical and cultural setting in France than in America, although the latter will be discussed in some detail. It will also be assumed that the reader is somewhat familiar with the historical issue of slavery in America.

Finally, in the *American Heritage Dictionary*, one can read a third definition of “holy” as follows: “Living according to a religious or spiritual system: *a holy man*.” The same dictionary defines piety as “religious devotion and reverence to God.”<sup>4</sup> Holiness can be defined in terms of moral actions, providing a connection between the terms holiness and piety. Holiness “lived out” develops a structure of piety in one’s life. For this reason, these terms, while possessing different nuances of meaning in English, are used interchangeably in this work. One reason for this is that in the Greek form the terms are interchangeable. In the end, their definition is the theme of this study: What is a holy life? And how can one live in pious devotion to God in the twenty-first century?

## **II. CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL**

### **A. THE BEGINNINGS**

Most Roman Catholics would have trouble identifying with William J. Seymour and most Pentecostals would have difficulty relating to Thérèse of Lisieux. Yet as the twentieth century passed the halfway mark, Catholics and Pentecostals found common ground in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. What would have seemed impossible 60 years prior became a reality, as Protestants and Catholics began to commingle in fellowship. An integral part of this was the Charismatic Renewal, which took place amongst mainline denominations beginning in the early 1960s, initiated by the ministry of Dennis Bennet, an Episcopal priest in Van Nuys, California.

Today, one can easily identify the “Duquesne weekend” as the flashpoint of Holy Spirit renewal for the Catholic Church. Four professors from Duquesne University were hungry for a more intimate communion with God and thus sought out the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, participants from the beginning, recount the story in their book published only two years after key events.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> William Morris, Editor. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. (Boston: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1970), 629, 992.

<sup>5</sup> Kevin & Dorothy Ranaghan. *Catholic Pentecostals* (Paramus, NJ: Paulists Press Deus Books, 1969), 7.



During the National Cursillo Convention in August of 1966, they were introduced to David Wilkerson's<sup>6</sup> *The Cross and the Switchblade*. They went on to pursue the baptism in the Holy Spirit at a local Episcopalian Charismatic fellowship and all were filled.

These four men testified of the events that had taken place. Having reflected upon their own theology, they saw no doctrinal conflict: everything that had transpired was highly biblical. By the middle of February, 1967, the four faculty members had arranged a retreat for about 30 students, most of whom had previously read *The Cross and the Switchblade*. That weekend the Holy Spirit began to minister amongst them as well, and the prayer meeting continued until 5 A.M. Some spoke in tongues, others did not, but the movement began to grow. The testimony of these students was that "they have been followed by months of living closer to Christ, of sharing the peace, joy, love, and confident faith..."<sup>7</sup>

A similar event took place at Notre Dame University, at the initiation of Ralph Keifer, between March 4 and 13. By 1970, the University of Notre Dame reported 1,300 participants, with 30,000 by 1974. By 1977, 110,000 people were meeting in 2,400 prayer groups throughout the United States. Around the world, by 1975, the figure was estimated at two- to four-million Catholic Charismatics. In 1983, the number of adherents who aligned with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States was estimated between 200,000 and 350,000.<sup>8</sup> Laurentin also reported the growth of the movement in France, with approximately 20,000 followers at the date of publication in 1974.

For Peter Hocken, the weekend in February 1967 at Duquesne University marked the beginning of the Charismatic movement in the Roman Catholic Church. Renowned Pentecostal pastor and author Jack Hayford portrays this event as God "uniting His church in profound ways through the fullness of the Holy Spirit."<sup>9</sup> This concurs with Donald Gelpi from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley University, who views the Charismatic movement as providing many opportunities for unity: "Shared charismatic prayer shatters denominational stereotypes..."<sup>10</sup>

Through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), one can see a common expression of Spirit-empowered, holy living. The Catholic Church readily received the movement, with Cardinal Suenens of

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<sup>6</sup> David Wilkerson was affiliated with the Assemblies of God and had a significant influence on this movement. His own ministry focused on helping those addicted to drugs and alcohol.

<sup>7</sup> Ranaghan, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Bord and Joseph Faulkner. *The Catholic Charismatics: The Anatomy of a Modern Religious Movement*. (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 7. Bord's book provides more of a sociological study. Although not theological, it is of value for its research.

<sup>9</sup> Jack Hayford. *The Charismatic Century: The Enduring Impact of the Azusa Street Revival*. (New York: Warner Faith, 2006), 223.

Belgium, a participant, influential in aiding its acceptance. With his role at Vatican II and as a Cardinal, such influence was crucial. But the pivotal moment was a CCR gathering in Rome in 1975, when 10,000 people gathered at St. Peter's Basilica and with vocal praise and prophecy swept into the Roman Church. Pope Paul VI thereafter appointed Cardinal Suenens to manage the development of the CCR within the Catholic Church.

The importance of this event and motivation for this study is that it concretely illustrates that the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal worlds are not so distant that they cannot find common ground. Further progress has been made in this regard through the Roman Catholic/Pentecostal dialogues held every quinquennia, beginning in 1972: "The Charismatic renewal is the first grassroots movement to span virtually all the Christian churches and traditions."<sup>11</sup> In other words, the Charismatic renewal has united all branches of Christianity to one degree or another.

An additional example of the connection between Catholics and Pentecostals comes from Africa. Father Maurice Zerr attempted to support Catholic doctrine in his 1986 article "The Catholic Charismatic Renewal." Although Zerr backed the doctrines of the Church, he was also committed to the practices of the CCR, one moment stating that one is baptised with the Holy Spirit at water baptism, the next describing how one can seek an experiential baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Zerr describes his personal testimony of the power of the Spirit as follows: "I do know that the Lord has touched my life in a special way through the Charismatic Renewal. He has renewed my priesthood, given me a deeper love for the Church, its sacraments, its leadership. ...He has given me some charismatic gifts that I exercise in my daily Christian life."<sup>12</sup> His story shows a genuine experience, a life changed and animated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sister M. Rita K. Ishengoma read Zerr's article and responded with a brief statement on how his writings had helped her. Ishengoma seemed to desire a genuine work of the Holy Spirit as well, but was concerned about possible problems. She also focused on the Roman Catholic theme of community, saying that "individuals receive the Spirit and the presence of the Risen One only through the community." Here one finds a key difference between the American and Roman Catholic understanding of piety. In the

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<sup>10</sup> Gelpi. "Conversion: The Challenge of Contemporary Charismatic Piety," 606-628. *Theological Studies* 43.4 (Dec 1982), 626.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Hocken. "Baptism in the Spirit as Prophetic Statement: A Reflection on the New Testament and on Pentecostal Origins." *Society for Pentecostal Studies*. 15 (1992) 1-22. Published as a collection of papers of the 21st meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, 1992. 231.

<sup>12</sup> Father Maurice Zerr. "The Catholic Charismatic Renewal," 293-305. *African Ecclesial Review* 28.5 (Oct 1986), 304.



former, all issues are individual; in the latter, it is the community which is important. In her last paragraph, Ishengoma emphasised the importance of love: “Charismatic prayer groups [SIC] involvement should take roots [SIC] in the Church through the power of the Spirit. So let those gifted by that Spirit show their talents through works of charity by sharing with others their life experiences of prayer and love.”<sup>13</sup>

What is noteworthy is that Ishengoma belonged to the order of St. Thérèse in Tanzania<sup>14</sup>. So, in her search for renewal—and possibly that of many other followers of Thérèse who support the CCR—the holiness of Thérèse was blended with the holiness of Pentecost and thus of William Seymour.

## CONCLUSION

The traditions of holiness/piety are well developed within the Roman Catholic Church. Nearly 2,000 years of church history and many monastic revivals have refined the tools of meditation and contemplation. While the Holy Spirit has been active in the Catholic Church these many centuries, the significance of the CCR is that a powerful new force of the Spirit, evidenced in the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, is animating and bringing renewed life and power to Catholic traditions. The testimonies of the participants themselves bear witness to this fresh influx of Holy Spirit power and activity.

In the CCR, one finds a mixture of Pentecostal and Roman Catholic piety, as William Seymour and Thérèse of Lisieux are united in their individual search for holiness. This is not to say that divergent doctrines have been combined, but rather that the holiness or piety of the Catholic Church and the Pentecostal Movement have found common expression. This is one example, and perhaps the best example, of how holiness is able to cross doctrinal and cultural boundaries. Although the Charismatic Movement post-dated Thérèse of Lisieux by almost 70 years, the life of her renewal continued through the decades and found new expression in the Pentecostal doctrine of Holy Spirit fullness.

While this study carefully examines the lives of Thérèse of Lisieux and William J. Seymour in an effort to discover other points in common in their pursuit of the supra-cultural elements of holiness, time will also be dedicated to examining opposing viewpoints of these two great renewal initiators.

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<sup>13</sup> Sister M. Rita K. Ishengoma. “The Catholic Charismatic Renewal,” 46-48. *African Ecclesial Review* 29.1 (Feb 1987), 47, 48.

<sup>14</sup> Sister Rita Ishengoma was a member of the Congregation of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus in Bukoba Diocese, Tanzania, according to the *African Ecclesial Review*. “The Need to Tap the Potential in African Women,” 97-101. Biographical footnote, *African Ecclesial Review* 38.2 (April 1996), 97.

# **PART I – HOLINESS IN THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX**

## **CHAPTER 2 – THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS SETTING OF NINETEENTH- CENTURY FRANCE**

### **SECTION 1 – ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION OF SANCTITY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

##### **1. Changing Catholic Procedures**

In considering holiness in the Roman Catholic Church, one is usually directed to the officially recognised saints who, it is assumed, are examples of what it means to live a holy life. Thérèse of Lisieux was declared a saint by the strict definitions of the established Roman Church in 1925. This leads one to ask, what is a saint? Is one referring to a saint in the Roman Catholic Church? Or is one speaking of an officially or unofficially recognised saint? The Apostle Paul referred to all true believers in Christ as saints. Kenneth Woodward, in 1989, set the top limit of saints at more than 10,000, far more than the hundreds who have been officially canonised by the Catholic Church.<sup>15</sup> Even if one examines only a strictly Roman Catholic view of holiness, it is not at all clear, simply because the method of decreeing saints has changed so much in the last 2,000 years. Because no official list of canonisation was created until the second millennium, it is virtually impossible to find a thorough list of the early saints. In general, the lack of early documentation and other factors is sufficient cause to consider with caution the idea of sanctity in the Catholic Church.

##### **2. Adoration versus Veneration**

Equally noteworthy is the difference between adoration and veneration in Roman Catholic tradition. Of course, adoration (*latria*) is worship reserved for God and veneration (*dulia*) a lower form of worship that Catholics would insist is appropriate for a saint. While this theoretical difference may be clear to theologians, in common practice throughout history the distinction has not been practically lived out in the life of the average worshipper: “The church’s distinction between worship, which belonged to God alone, and veneration, which might be accorded to his saints, meant little to the peasant whose fields



gave abundant yield or the journeyman whose blind daughter was made to see by a local holy man.”<sup>16</sup>

Hence, while in the modern era one might be able to distinguish between the two, this has not always been so.

### **3. Invented Saints**

A final caution in this area: considering the lack of clarity with which one is able to view the saints within the past 2,000 years, it is not surprising that some of them lack historicity. Sociologist Pierre Delooz labels these “constructed saints,” defining a genuine saint as one who began as a “real” person and for whom there exists a great deal of objective information.<sup>17</sup> In *Discipleship and Imagination*, David Brown presents a plausible explanation for constructed or invented saints. Both Catherine of Alexandria and Margaret of Antioch appear to have been invented or constructed, in that the historical data for their lives is not verifiable. Their influence can be seen in the life of Joan of Arc, a true historical figure, who claims that these two saints were most responsible for guiding her in her personal life; for example, in her decision to wear men’s clothing. Brown clearly demonstrates that the purpose of these legends and invented saints as a whole was to provide a response to the aspirations and fears so present in the culture, and provides a great service by explaining the relationship with and purpose of invented saints in general.

## **I. HISTORICAL SURVEY**

### **A. EARLY TRADITION**

#### **1. The Martyr**

Who was the first saint of the Church? If the New Testament documents are to be taken into consideration, it was Stephen, the first martyr of the New Testament Church and the prototype of all martyrs to follow.<sup>18</sup> However, it was not only Stephen who was considered a saint in that era. During the New Testament times, the Greek term for “saint” was used to refer to any baptised member of the Church and also those who had died in the faith.

Following the New Testament record, it is in fact best to avoid the use of the word “saint,” since in the first centuries of the Church there was no formal process for the declaration of sainthood. It was

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 51. That number has now reached 500 during the papacy of John-Paul II, who canonised more than 300, more than all of his predecessors combined.

<sup>16</sup> Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell. *Saints & Society: Christendom, 1000-1700*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 146.

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Delooz, *Towards a Sociological Study of Canonized Sainthood in the Catholic Church*, Edited by Stephen Wilson, *Saints and their Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 195.

<sup>18</sup> The story of his martyrdom can be found in Acts 7:54-60.

only through a gradual occurrence that the term came to be reserved for a unique category of holy persons: the martyr. In the early years, it was probably advisable to follow the thinking of Peter Brown in this regard and label the saint a “holy man”<sup>19</sup> rather than a “saint.” Although this difference is understandable in English, the distinction would not have been clear in the original language, as has already been stated. The notion was that since there was no official saint-proclaiming organisation, those considered holy were simply that, “holy,” but were not officially recognised as saints. There was no inquiry or ecclesiastical pronouncement. The “saint” was almost universally a martyr, and this recognition was a spontaneous response to the extraordinary sacrifice made by one of its local Christians.

## **2. Joining Heaven and Earth**

Peter Brown describes this worship at the tombs of the martyrs as the joining of “heaven and earth.”<sup>20</sup> Woodward continues this theme, shedding light on this element of communion or fellowship between the living Christians and the dead saints which is celebrated at the tomb.<sup>21</sup> While this explains the significance of the grave, it is still important to remember that the saint was somehow considered to be there at the tomb: “Their belief was that the spirit of the dead saint, though in heaven, was present in a special way through his remains. Thus, wherever a saint’s relics were venerated, heaven and earth met and intermingled in ways that were new to Western societies...”<sup>22</sup> Not only were the saints believed to be present at their place of burial, they might even have been considered more present there than Christ in the Eucharist.

In the thinking of the day, even though He was present in the Eucharist, Christ was viewed as distant, a powerful deity in heaven, whereas the saint was right there with the Christians in their struggles, as could clearly be seen by their tombs. Also, in art Christ was sometimes pictured as angry, which made Him appear even more distant. One example of this is the Virgin Mary turning her face away from Christ.<sup>23</sup> If Mary was unable to gaze upon the Christ, how could the average Christian dare approach Him? Such was the thinking of many, an idea that grew to dominate during the Middle Ages. In this

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<sup>19</sup> Averil Cameron. *On Defining the Holy Man*. In *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, edited by James Howard-Johnston and Paul Antony Haward. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 27.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1981), 1.

<sup>21</sup> Woodward, 56.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>23</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan. *The Illustrated Jesus Through the Centuries*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 110. The focus in the picture is the connection between Christ and Adam, whose skull is pictured at the foot of the cross. Still, Mary is seen with her face turned away from Christ, a powerful image that could be said to suggest distance and inapproachability.



sense, the saint was more present and available than Christ in all of His awesome glory in heaven.<sup>24</sup> This felt distance facilitated the need for saints as intermediaries in the minds of some distressed Christians.

While the tombs held great importance, the stories of martyrdom were also added into the worship of the Church, thus becoming the most popular literature of the day, next to the scriptures. At times, it was possible to read the actual trial of a Christian before the local magistrate. In the death of the martyr, one could see the sustaining power of Christ. It was believed that only by the presence of Christ could the martyr remain strong in his faith until the bitter end.

### **3. True Martyrdom Defined**

The first Church decisions that even remotely relate to the subject of “making saints” were at the request of Augustine, who faced a considerable problem with the Donatists, who used any means to become a martyr: “It was their daily sport to kill themselves, by throwing themselves over precipices, or into the water, or into the fire.”<sup>25</sup> Before Augustine, the Council of Carthage in 348 made an attempt to stop this radical, self-imposed martyrdom by defining the characteristics of a true martyr. “True martyrdom must be preceded by the confession of the name of Christ and must be built on the foundation of the love of peace.”<sup>26</sup> While it is obvious that the Donatists were the target of this statement, and more should be said to define martyrdom, it is nonetheless a beginning point.

### **4. From Martyrdom to Asceticism**

Prior to Augustine, during the rule of Constantine,<sup>27</sup> martyrdom became unavailable as a pathway to holiness. With these political changes, persecution concluded and asceticism took primacy as the method by which one demonstrated holiness. The idea in asceticism was that of a very rigorous life including, fasts, watchings, uncomfortable clothing, and other forms of daily pain and suffering. The goal was to “...attain a higher spiritual state or a more thorough absorption into the Sacred.”<sup>28</sup> In this way, the ascetic underwent a continual, daily “martyrdom” of self and will. These individuals were often seen as “holy” even while remaining alive. Eventually, their stories began to compete with those of martyrs from previous centuries.

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<sup>24</sup> David Brown. *Discipleship and Imagination: Christian Tradition and Truth*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 68.

<sup>25</sup> Augustine of Hippo cited by Stephen Wilson, 27.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Perham. *The Communion of Saints*. (London: SPCK, Holy Trinity Church, 1980), 27.

<sup>27</sup> The date of his rule is a subject of much discussion. One may choose the date of 311, the Edict of Galerius, or 313, the Edict of Milan, or a later date in 324, when his power was solidified over the entire empire.

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence S. Cunningham and Keith J. Egan, *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 107.

## **5. Mysticism**

It is also during this period of time that mystical practices became more developed. Of course, for the mystics, the prototype mystic is seen in the life of Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:39). This emphasis was developed theologically and practically in the writings of Origen, believing that, in the spiritual realm, each human has the capability to perceive in a parallel way, similar to the five senses normally attributed to humans in the physical realm.

## **6. Relics**

Returning to asceticism, the question arose when an ascetic died of how people could know that he had not yielded to temptation in the privacy of his cell. The proof of his or her holiness was in the number of miracles that occurred in answer to prayers at his or her tomb. Augustine was a great supporter of this concept, and even more so after the remains of the Apostle Stephen were discovered.

This brings us to the subject of relics.<sup>29</sup> When Constantinople was made the imperial capital, there was no longer a fresh supply of martyrs for the cemeteries. For this reason, the bodies or remains of some very important saints were relocated from the Holy Land to the new Rome. If there were significant tombs, then shrines were built over the cemeteries. If there were no saints' tombs in a particular city, then relics would be translated to the altar. The end result was a joining of the tomb and the altar. In the eighth century, the Council of Nicaea (787) mandated that every consecrated church have at least one relic in its altar. Many of these were not relics of saints, but supposedly pieces of the cross or of the dress of the Virgin Mary.

## **7. Patronage**

It was also in the first centuries that the Church adopted from the Roman culture the idea of patronage.<sup>30</sup> By the third century, this invisible companion was an accepted part of Christian culture. Moreover, it was intimately linked to the person at birth. Astrological charts were consulted to know when the patron or guardian joined the individual at his or her entrance into the world. The use of Christian names is another reflection of the patronage model, which spread from individuals to cities and ultimately to regions and nations. Proof of this can be seen in the relocation of Stephen's remains to Augustine's hometown and the saint's great importance there from then on.

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<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, this great value placed on the saints' relics developed into many abuses. In later centuries, relics would be stolen, and during the crusades the great cities in the east were pillaged for their relics. This abuse of and traffic in relics continued until the Reformation.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Brown, 51.



## 8. Suffering

Another element that developed during this time related to the sufferings of the saints. In the public reading of a saint's passion, his or her suffering lived in the present: "A sweet scent filled the basilica, the blind, the crippled, and the possessed began to shout that they now felt his power in healing."<sup>31</sup> These graphic stories of death were told again and again, giving the impression that in recounting the saints' sufferings, those hearing could be healed. For example, when the priest Lucianus discovered the body of Saint Stephen near Caphargamala its unveiling proved quite enthralling: "At that instant the earth trembled and a smell of sweet perfume came from the place, such as no man had ever known...And at that very hour, from the smell of that perfume, seventy-three persons were healed."<sup>32</sup>

What contributed to the popularity of saints? Although saints were declared holy, it was actually their power which the average Christian sought: healing, blessing on one's harvest, etc. Wilson provides an explanation suitable for Roman Catholic doctrine as to the origin of this power: "As the functions of the body were denied and overcome, so supra-corporal power accrued to the saint: 'the powers of the body made way for the power of the spirit', in the words of St Hilary. And this process reached its culmination at death, the final denial of the body."<sup>33</sup> As with many aspects of this discussion of sanctity, this explanation would appeal to a Roman Catholic, but not a Protestant.

## CONCLUSION

It may appear that this early history of the saints is unrelated to our primary subjects and, in particular, to Thérèse of Lisieux; however, it is a fact that her personal views regarding holiness were deeply influenced by this early Church history. Certainly, Thérèse would not have accepted the idea of invented saints, having lived prior to Vatican II, and even more so since Joan of Arc was one of her most prized saints. Still, one can find in the first centuries of the Church the formation of some of Thérèse's most important views on holiness. First, she saw martyrdom as the most direct avenue to sainthood and thus holiness. Second, she accepted the idea that heaven and earth were joined together through the saints; in this, the saints were mediators between man and God because of the communion between the living and dead. Third, she was a part of the ascetic tradition which replaced martyrdom as the means to sainthood or holiness. Fourth, she was mystical in her practices of holiness, less than some yet nonetheless mystical. Fifth, she valued relics and their power, even her own relics as she approached death. Sixth, she was

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<sup>31</sup> Peter Brown, 82.

<sup>32</sup> *Epistula Luciani* 2, PL 41.809. Cited by Peter Brown, 92.

<sup>33</sup> St Hilary cited by Hoare (ed.), *The Western Fathers*, 253; cited by Stephen Wilson, 10.

impacted to some extent by the patron model of sainthood, regarding saints as one's representatives. Seventh, she counted suffering as part of daily martyrdom and credited human suffering with spiritual good. In recognizing the imprint of the Early Church upon her life, through the long tradition of the Catholic Church, one gains a more immediate understanding of her views.

## **B. EARLY MEDIEVAL TRADITION**

In the early Middle Ages, monastic life was extremely powerful. With the commitment to the monastic "rule," it was believed that a monk was able to grow not only in spirituality, but in sanctity as well, which resulted in receiving power as did the saints in scripture. This was accomplished through "a radical renunciation of all private property and of all self-will, a humble and absolute submission to his superiors, and a battle for spiritual control over the flesh and the attainment of purity of heart..."<sup>34</sup> The pathway to holiness was to become a monk or nun. Pilgrimages, although beginning much earlier, gained popularity during the early Middle Ages. Of course, it was at the time of the crusades that pilgrimages became almost mandatory for the wealthy and influential. Such pilgrimages were most often visits to the shrine of a saint and were performed primarily out of devotion, but during the Middle Ages eventually became punishment for certain sins. Both the monastic life and pilgrimages were essential in the life of Thérèse. Conditioned by her culture, she believed that the only sure way to sainthood and thus holiness was to enter a convent. Such submission to superiors came from this long tradition of the Rule. In addition, she participated in the practice of pilgrimage, most notably with her visit to Rome.

## **C. LATE MEDIEVAL TRADITION**

Although possessing some authority in the saint-making process prior to this, it was not until 1234 that the Pope officially took control of the process of canonisation with the publishing of Gregory IX's *Decretals*, stating that the right of canonisation was "expressly reserved to the Holy See."<sup>35</sup> These changes required the introduction of local tribunals with representatives of the Pope hearing testimony regarding the candidate's virtues and miracles. During the fourteenth century, a full trial was required, with the petitioners being represented by a procurator and the Pope being represented by the "Promoter of the Faith," who came to be known as "the Devil's Advocate." These trials became colossal events, often

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<sup>34</sup> Jean Leclercq, Edited by Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985), 117-118.

<sup>35</sup> Jacobus Schlafke, *de competentia in Causis Sanctorum Decernendi a Primis Post Christum Natum Saeculis usque ad Annum 234* (Romae: Officium Libri Catholici, 1961), 15. Cited by Sarno, 41.



calling hundreds of witnesses and lasting several months. Consequently, it is not surprising that from 1200 to 1334 only 26 candidates were approved for canonisation.

There were several key elements in the popularity of saints during the Middle Ages: the miraculous, the supernatural, prophecy and clairvoyance, stigmata, levitation, extended fasts, mystical communication, the vow of poverty and ecstasy. Yet with all of this power, a true saint remained humble, considering the miraculous as incidental to the more important elements of a holy life. For the ascetics, the pinnacle of power was not in the extreme flagellation, but in the renunciation of the sexual, apparently considered the most significant temptation for a saintly young man: "Even the most abstemious saint had to eat and drink occasionally, but there was no such thing as an almost virginal saint."<sup>36</sup> The average person deeply desired the things that the ascetic forfeited: fertility, good food and health.

A concluding remark must be made relative to the Middle Ages from a sociological perspective. It was in the thirteenth century that pessimism came to rule in Europe as a result of famine, war, crop failure, plague, and other negative factors. Death and instability replaced growth and progress. Scapegoats, apocalyptic visions and papal schism disintegrated the Church, leading the way to the Reformation.

One can distinguish in the life of Thérèse of Lisieux the importance of the miraculous, purgatory, mysticism, poverty, and chastity. She was clearly a mystic and could be viewed as prophetic, even predicting her own death, yet not interested in the more amazing miracles such as stigmata or levitation. Women mystics held an important role for her, such as her namesake Theresa of Avila, although not born until after the Reformation. All of these traditions were woven into the fabric of the Catholic Church and influenced her worldview.

#### **D. AFTER URBAN VIII**

It is not possible to look at the key decisions made by Urban VIII in the seventeenth century without observing them in the context of the Protestant Reformation. Just prior to the Reformation, for example, Tyndale maintained that the motive for veneration was not one of love or even in response to love, but was actually motivated by the fear of punishment.<sup>37</sup> In the mid-fourteenth century, John Wycliffe vigorously attacked the popular worship of the saints, although he did not disagree with the eschatology of the Church nor its views concerning purgatory and the need to pray to the Virgin Mary. As regards Luther, his journey to become a monk is said to have come in answered prayer to St Anne during

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<sup>36</sup> Weinstein, 154.

a thunderstorm. But both Luther and Calvin rejected the mediation of the saints for the same reasons they rejected the mediation of the priests.

One finds in the Catholic Church, at this time of transition, that the faithful carefully examined the abuses related to the saints: “Even among reformers who remained loyal to Catholicism, most notably Erasmus, the ‘superstitious’ extremes of saints’ cults were held up to satire and ridicule.”<sup>38</sup> At the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Catholic Church vehemently reaffirmed the cult of the saints and their relics while at the same time moving the Church towards reform. Many names were removed from the Church’s crowded calendar of saints. Pope Sixtus V created the Congregation of Sacred Rites in 1588 in order to correct some of these abuses, as well as to develop an organisation competent to decide the important issues of beatification and canonisation.<sup>39</sup> It was not until Urban VIII (1623-1644), however, that a complete overhaul of the saint-making process was put into effect.<sup>40</sup> The work of reform was not completed until Prospero Lambertini; two years before he became pope, he finished his important work on the subject of canonisation.

The result of these changes was considerable. First, the importance of miracles and signs was replaced by a reputation of moral example. What ensued was a distinction between whom the people saw as a saint—a miracle-worker full of charisma and power—and who could actually survive the canonisation process! A second shift had to do with methodology. Heroic virtue became paramount while the story of the saint decreased in importance, thereby excluding all of the miracles and amazing mystical events of the saint’s life. Since miracles and wonders could be done with magic, only heroic virtue was a sure sign of saintliness. The narrative was replaced with a juridical process full of legal briefs and arguments.

There were four elements in this juridical sanctity. First, the writings: everything that a potential saint had written would be scrutinized. Just one page, such as a will, could stop the process for someone who had taken a vow of poverty. Second, heroic virtues: these included the three Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity, as well as the four cardinal virtues of fortitude, justice, prudence and temperance. For the religious orders were added the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as the rules of the respective communities. Following the tradition of Thomas Aquinas, other virtues were added, such as

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<sup>37</sup> William Tyndale cited by Michael Perham, *The Communion of the Saints*, 38-39.

<sup>38</sup> Weinstein, 185.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Sarno. *Diocesan Inquiries Required by the Legislator in the New Legislation for the Causes of the Saints*. (Romae: Pontificia Universitate Gregoriana, 1987), 8.

<sup>40</sup> Woodward, 75. This revision of the process was complete in 1642.



patience, constancy, humility, and so on, usually connected to one of the previously-listed virtues. In the trial, each of these virtues was to be individually examined. The third element was that of martyrdom. If someone was a martyr, there was no need to prove heroic virtue. Eventually, simply a violent death was sufficient to be considered a “martyr.” Martyrdom seemed to compensate for all human failures and weaknesses. The last element in this juridical process was miracles. It was this extensive process which was applied to Thérèse of Lisieux in her examination for beatification. Although greatly abbreviated here, one can observe that this was a highly limiting process; only lives with impeccable credentials had hope of approval.

## E. RECENT CHANGES

On March 19, 1969, Pope Paul VI issued a statement, *Sanctitas clarior*, its primary goal being “to accelerate the causes of canonisation by unifying the procedures employed.”<sup>41</sup> Later on January 25, 1983, everything pertaining to the making of saints was officially revised: “Pope John Paul II, issued an Apostolic Constitution, ‘Divinus perfectionis Magister,’ mandating the most thoroughgoing reforming of the saint-making process since the decrees of Urban VIII.”<sup>42</sup> Again, one notes a paradigm shift:

No longer would the church look to the courtroom as its model for arriving at the truth of a saint’s life; instead, it would employ the academic model of researching and writing a doctoral dissertation. Hereafter, causes would be accepted or rejected according to the canons of critical historiography, not by the arguments of contending advocates.<sup>43</sup>

With one act, the Supreme Pontiff removed an archaic and troublesome procedure. In its place, one finds the modern tools of historical criticism. The postulator oversees the cause, paying bills, deciding which event will most likely serve as a miracle. The postulator and relator are paid little or nothing, so the greatest costs have to do with travel and the final ceremony. The total bill will usually be between 100,000 and 150,000 (GBP), although exact figures would be hard to come by. Most of this money will come from the supporting organisation.

Since the local bishop instigates the process, it is still possible that the Pope will influence the outcome of a candidate’s cause. In fact, it is very likely. The first point of influence comes in the issuing of the *nihil obstat*. Add to this the fact that Pope John Paul II travelled more than have any of his predecessors. Countries that do not boast many saints are given priority in the list of processing. The Pope’s influence is also theological. Pope John Paul II worked diligently to give the Church a fresh supply

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<sup>41</sup> Sarno, 18.

<sup>42</sup> Woodward, 90.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 91.

of saints in order to re-emphasise current models of holiness: "...the Pope is using the saint-making process as a way of countering the influence of moral theologians who disagree with his teachings."<sup>44</sup>

Unquestionably, the congregation wants more lay saints in contrast to the multitude of saints from religious orders. Women candidates for sainthood are also a priority; only twenty percent of saints approved before the twentieth century were women.<sup>45</sup> That number has increased greatly in the last one hundred years; however, married women who become saints are the rarest. "Saints are of overwhelmingly aristocratic or upper-class origin... saints are also overwhelmingly male."<sup>46</sup>

The reforms of 1983 were broad and far-reaching. The process of canonisation was greatly simplified (and made more affordable). Such reforms, near the end of the last century, did not impact Thérèse of Lisieux's life; however, they have had an enormous impact on how holiness is currently viewed in the Catholic Church. Pope John Paul II conscientiously endeavoured to reacquaint the Church with its popular figures and to introduce new models of holiness. Although Thérèse was immensely popular worldwide at the beginning of the last century, her importance has diminished as other saints, local and national, have come to the forefront. Still, she is one of the most admired saints in France, competing with Joan of Arc as Patroness of France, and her popularity improved after being declared Doctor of the Church in 1997, the centennial year of her death.

## CONCLUSION

For the first thousand years of the history of the Church, the selecting of saints was a local decision. In the early years, it was simply the recognition of martyrs and the celebration of their going to heaven—hence, sainthood. Later in the first millennium, the selection process became more structured to reduce abuses, but still remained generally a local event. More recently, with the emphasis on historicity and the removal of the majority of the juridical process, and with the postulators essentially planning a ceremony where he will preside, the Pope's influence dominates.

This survey has constructed the framework of Thérèse of Lisieux's view of holiness, which carefully followed the traditions of the Catholic Church, with few exceptions. Foundational were her views on martyrdom, the communion of the saints, the mystical—including the prophetic, relics, suffering, and the importance of the monastic life—the Rule and submission to authority, purgatory, and,

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<sup>44</sup> Woodward, 121.

<sup>45</sup> This is the figure for the Roman Catholic Church. The number is actually much lower in eastern Churches.

<sup>46</sup> Wilson, 37.

last but not least, chastity. During her brief life, she only deviated on the subject of purgatory, and then only slightly.



## **SECTION 2 - THE CULTURAL SETTING OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1. The importance of the monarchy**

In order to understand the history of nineteenth-century France, one must briefly examine the monarchy of the eighteenth century, for the significant forces that attracted and divided French culture began centuries earlier. At the start of the nineteenth century, French Catholic piety was inextricably linked to the monarchy of the previous century. Moreover, immediately following the Revolution, French Catholic piety was clearly antagonistic to the Revolution, the Republic, Liberty, and the ideas that emerged with the modernisation of society. With the exception of Liberal Piety, which will be described later, French Catholic piety clearly became opposed to any movement of change in the culture. An example of this was the continual attempts by the Church to return a king to the throne, even as late as the 1870s.

#### **2. Three Types of Holiness/Piety**

To understand Thérèse of Lisieux, one must be aware of the culture of nineteenth-century France. On a popular level, it is my opinion that three significant attitudes concerning holiness or piety existed at this time. First was the group influenced by the monarchy, which for the purposes of this chapter is identified as Monarchist Piety. Second was a type of piety that originated from the Liberal Catholic Movement in the 1830s and 1840s, which I call Liberal Piety, influential at the end of the century as well but suppressed for most of the second-half of the nineteenth century. Third was a style of piety that started with the Ultramontane Movement, made popular from the 1840s to the end of the century, which I will term Ultramontane Piety.

The first and last movements at times became blended, taking on characteristics that might simply be called Conservative Piety. Both the Monarchist and Ultramontane Pieties rejected change, held strongly to the traditions of the past, and deeply opposed Liberal Piety. These three movements had considerable influence in France during the century leading up to the life of Thérèse.



### **3. Monarchist Piety - The Preference of Particular Social Groups**

Political and religious loyalties are often passed on from generation to generation. Certain cultural groups in France, such as the Aristocracy, the Army, the French Academy, and some members of the Bourgeoisie, were loyal to the monarchy late into the nineteenth century. The Church was loyal to the Army which was, in my opinion, an expression of loyalty to the Monarch and also a resistance to change. The Army, by virtue of its traditions, was typically opposed to change and so continued to represent and express Monarchist Piety through its officers. Thérèse's family on both sides had roots in the Army, and this reason alone would be sufficient to link them in loyalty to the monarchy.

## **I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Seven unique governments affected the Church and its traditions in nineteenth-century France:

(1) Christian Monarchs ruled France from the time of Clovis (Christmas, 496)<sup>47</sup> to Louis XVI (January 2, 1793); (2) The Revolution began in 1789 and continued until the reign of, (3) Napoleon, 1800. His empire lasted until 1814/1815 and was followed by the return of, (4) monarchy, Louis XVIII. Charles X succeeded him as king and fled the country during the July Revolution of 1830; (5) Louis-Philippe, a Republican sympathizer, ruled until the Revolution of 1848; (6) Louis-Napoleon (Napoleon III), the nephew of Bonaparte, became President and then Emperor until 1870, when the Prussians defeated him; (7) The Third Republic was formed in 1875 and would continue until World War II. These governmental structures deeply impacted the Church, as well as directly and indirectly influencing the views of French piety in the nineteenth century.

### **A. MONARCHIST PIETY (BEFORE THE REVOLUTION)**

#### **The Pattern of Monarchist Piety**

The most significant issues related to French Catholic Piety in the nineteenth century and the Catholic Church in general find their origins during the reign of Louis XIV, when the political structures of French Gallicanism<sup>48</sup> were solidified. For the French Catholic Church, Gallicanism meant that the king controlled the Church. (Ultramontanes desired to see more influence of the Church from Rome and less from the French government.) Louis XIV was known for his extreme devotion to the Church, doing

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<sup>47</sup> Justo Gonzalez. *The Story of Christianity, Volume I, The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation.* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984), 234.

<sup>48</sup> Gallicanism is French Catholic Nationalism with an extreme distrust of Rome. In short, Gallicanism stated that the political or civil power of the government was independent of the spiritual power of the Church. Also, it stated that a General Council of bishops was above the power of the Pope.

everything in his power to remove heresy from France, to the point of excluding all other religions or ideologies. He believed that France must be entirely Christian, which by his definition meant entirely Catholic. Although he was satisfied at his death that all movements of heresy had been stamped out in France, he was quite mistaken. Moreover, one's declaration of being Catholic could not ensure devotion to the Catholic Church or its creeds. Hypocrisy ruled supreme amongst many of the prelates of the Church, who desired wealth more than a life of holiness.

### **The Confessing State**

During and following the reign of Louis XIV up to the Revolution, the French government and the Church became so closely connected that they were virtually indistinguishable. This was especially true after the solidifying of the Gallican Articles in 1682, which were designed to protect the French Monarch from the intrusive control of the Pope witnessed in previous centuries. It is my opinion that the Gallican Articles were a political response to the political/religious power that for centuries had been used and abused by the Popes. It was during the papacy of Innocent III (1198-1216) that the tools of excommunication and interdiction were used with such skill to control not only people but also entire countries: "Pope Innocent III<sup>49</sup> successfully applied or threatened the interdict 85 times against uncooperative princes."<sup>50</sup> These same tools were used by other religious leaders as well, but never with such effectiveness.

Over time, the Gallican Articles garnered a great following among the French clergy, with the majority of French priests supporting and protecting them from attack both inside and outside France's borders. Prior to the Revolution, when Gallicanism was in full force, in order to be a French citizen one first needed to be a member of the Catholic Church, including baptism and receiving Communion. This was the key point in Monarchist Piety, which began during the reign of Louis XIV and continued until the Revolution. The French Church was submitted, even subjugated, to the government, as illustrated in 1757 by the local government in Paris gaining control over the sacraments for that region.

The power of the Church greatly increased, thanks to its close association with the monarchy, but the value of the sacraments was degraded to a tool of citizenship. The taking of the sacraments, a sign of piety, was diminished to religious insignificance, at the centre of a political power struggle. Only a few

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<sup>49</sup> Innocent III was Pope at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries. Although this was long before the period of the monarchy discussed, it explains the defensive attitude of the monarchs and their desire to rule in such a dominant way over the Church.

<sup>50</sup> Bruce Shelley. *Church History in Plain Language*. (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995), 185.



were willing to yield their citizenship in order to reject the confessing State: Protestants, Jansenists<sup>51</sup> and the *philosophes*<sup>52</sup>. Yet, it must be remembered that after Louis XIV the Protestants and Jansenists were declared heretical. Thus, for the average French person, loyalty to the Church was loyalty to the king. Formal Gallicanism in France was no longer able to control the French Church following the Revolution, but in terms of the Catholic Church, the Gallican spirit remained very much alive until Vatican I. Although Louis XIV near the end of his reign destroyed organised Jansenism, it continued to influence the Church by means of an emphasis on morals. This was usually evidenced by extreme scruples in regard to Communion. With the influence of Jansenism evident in this way towards the end of the nineteenth century, it influenced Thérèse's family accordingly.

### **A Clash of Ideologies**

The monarchy prior to the Revolution illustrates the intimate relationship between the Church and the government. For this reason, it can be stated that the Church was intrinsically biased against the Republic, since the Republic, at its root level, had worked to erode the comfortable relationship held by the Church for so many centuries. In addition, the philosophical conflict created by a State-controlled Church was now coming into focus. The impossibility of the co-existence of religious freedom and Gallican domination became evident. Once the pattern of Monarchist Piety was understood, the stage was set for the eventual clash between the French Church and issues of liberty.

### **Examples of Monarchist Piety**

In September 1824, Charles X became king and made sacrilege a crime punishable by death. In Charles X one can see a combination of royal power and strict religious practices. Another example of Monarchist Piety was the faithfulness of the average Catholic to religiously-organised instruction. The Church continued to seek the favour of the government to establish and expand religious education. This conflict over education, religious verses secular, personifies the heart of the struggle between the Monarchists and the Republicans in the nineteenth century.

Although Gallicanism was eliminated as an option shortly before Thérèse's birth, the Gallican spirit lived on in many French clergy and faithful Catholics. Considering Thérèse's pilgrimage to Rome and her comments about the Holy See, it is unlikely that she would have held extreme Gallican views. At

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<sup>51</sup> The history of Jansenism is a long and complex one, beginning with the bishop of Ypres, Cornelius Jansen, and his book *Augustinus*, published posthumously in 1640. Jansenism described all humanity as damned because of original sin; man's very nature is perverse. Jansenism also agreed with the doctrine of predestination and that Christ only died for the predestined.

<sup>52</sup> Today we would define the *philosophes* as atheists or "secular humanists."

the same time, it would only be natural for a faithful Catholic to desire the same prestige and privilege that the Church enjoyed during the monarchy, which could have happened as late as 1870. Even today, prayers for the king are sometimes heard in French churches, such as at the pilgrimage church of Rocamadour.

## **B. MONARCHIST PIETY VERSUS LIBERTY**

### **The Unacceptability of Liberty**

The greatest error of the French Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, in my opinion, was its stubborn refusal to accept the rights of liberty. Loyalty to the Monarch along with the privileges of the Gallican Church made it impossible for the vast majority of Catholic hierarchy to recognise the value of liberty, since it meant the end of the French Catholic Nation, openness to other faiths, pluralism, and many other “evils.” Salvation was viewed on a national scale, not individually. On the issue of liberty, for loyal Catholics the Revolution represented all that was wicked.

### **The Church is Dismantled, Crushed and Reorganised**

While space here will not permit a comprehensive recounting of the French Revolution, some of the major turning points should be highlighted. France was bankrupt and therefore required the resources of the Church; thus, in a series of decisions beginning in August 1789, the government began to take from the Church its wealth. It began with the redemption of the tithes and then, in October, the ecclesiastical lands. In December, monastic vows were ended, and in February 1790, all religious orders were disallowed (for men only). All Church property was to be given over (April 1790) and in May of 1790, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy<sup>53</sup> was enacted. In a period of one year, the structure of the Catholic Church in France was destroyed.

On January 2, 1793, the king was executed. June was the “Reign of Terror” in Paris and in September arrests multiplied against any enemy of the State: some 30,000 were imprisoned. The Queen was beheaded the following October. In terms of Catholic holiness or piety, the attack on the Church by the Revolution drove loyal Catholics even closer to the monarchy, and Monarchist Piety still thrived among the faithful.

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<sup>53</sup> On July 12, 1790, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was passed into law. It was an example of extreme Gallicanism and made the Church a department of the government. The document decided the Diocesan boundaries, the process of appointing new bishops, the salaries of the clergy, and the requirements for bishops and priests. The government then began to attempt to force all clergy to take the oath of loyalty. Statistics vary, but of the more than 23,000 priests, it is said that between 45 and 56 percent of them took the vow of loyalty (juring priests), depending on which source one quotes.



## **A Vacuum of Piety**

On November 7, 1793, the Bishop of Paris publicly apostatised. The cruelty of the government towards the Church went unhindered by any sense of conscience or justice and the city of Paris descended into an abyss of faithlessness. Later that month, all churches in Paris were declared closed and a pension was offered to any priest who would abjure. Following this, Paris was lost in a binge of atheistic debauchery and violence against the Church. Holiness ceased to exist in the form of organised religion. In a few short years, the Church went from being the favoured daughter of the king to being the outlaw of the Republic.

## **A Rejection of Liberty by the Church**

During the Revolution and throughout the nineteenth century, the Church was confronted by the crucial issue of liberty. Because of the pain caused it by the Revolution—the confiscation of property, the deportation and execution of priests, and the violence and sacrilege against Church properties—the Church became adamantly opposed to the Republic, not realising that hidden inside the violence and vengeance of the Republic was this important issue.

With democracy and liberty vitally connected, Gough described the conflict in these terms: “The sovereignty of parliament took no account of the sovereignty of the will of God; it was based on the concept of law as something arrived at by the clash of rival opinions and the counting of votes, instead of something deduced with philosophical certainty from the first principles.”<sup>54</sup> Decisions made by the masses, according to the principles of liberty through democracy, could not be acceptable to a Church governed by the principles of theology and Church tradition. If the Republic meant that decisions were made by voting and not by Church tradition, then liberty, that is, freedom, was the enemy. Monarchist Piety, in standing for the Church and its traditions, placed itself in opposition to the Republic and thus in opposition to liberty.

## **Individual or National Piety**

Also difficult for the modern mind to comprehend was that conversion was seen in a collective sense, as illustrated by Emile Poulat, who described the social problem in terms of liberty. For Poulat, the issue was that Catholicism focused on society as a whole rather than on the rights of the individual.<sup>55</sup> This view of religion as controlling all of society made it very hard for the French Church to accept the ideas of

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<sup>54</sup> Austin Gough. *Paris and Rome: The Gallican Church and the Ultramontane campaign, 1848-1853*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 70.



democracy, individual rights and liberties. If all of society must be converted together, then liberty and freedom of religion were not rights the Gallican Church was willing to recognise. The idea that loyalty to the king meant loyalty to the Church, and denied individual freedom, was very much a part of the religious faithful at the beginning of the nineteenth century—and for some of the faithful throughout the century. Therefore, this included the Martin family and most likely Thérèse personally.

### C. NAPOLEON

This distaste for liberty sheds light on the country's love of Napoleon, the First Consul. Anything would be better than the Revolution, that is, anything that would bring order and a measure of favour to the Church. Napoleon understood this well and curried the Church's favour, gaining a large measure of control. While Napoleon was not personally committed to the views of the Catholic Church, he saw within it a perfect tool for controlling the people and establishing his own power.

Napoleon also wanted to heal the rift between the two Churches, juring and nonjuring, and so approached the Pope for assistance. In 1801, the Concordat<sup>56</sup> was signed with Rome and Catholicism was restored, if only in measure. Napoleon yielded some control of the bishops in exchange for a Gallican Church. In essence, Napoleon traded certain Gallican liberties, such as the consecration of bishops, for the right to absolute control over the Church. In order for this to work, the bishops, who had been faithful to the Pope throughout the entire Revolution, were forced to resign. Only the Pope could enact this change and he so decided, motivated by the possibility of control over all the bishops. It seems scandalous today that the Pope would reject the clergy who had been most loyal to the Church, but much of their loyalty was to the Gallican Church of France, not to him personally.

One of Napoleon's key political accomplishments was the reorganisation of all of the schools under the "Imperial *Université*." Napoleon's University was not a single school but an educational system that controlled all of the workings of education in France, from elementary school to the university halls. All private schools, if approved, had to work within the structure of the *Université*. Even at this early date in the century, preference for religious education was evident amongst the favoured classes. Partiality

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<sup>55</sup> Poulat, Emile. *Liberté, Laïcité. La guerre des deux France et le principe de la modernité*. (Paris: Editions de Cerf, 1987) 39.

<sup>56</sup> The word 'Concordat' during the Middle Ages was used to describe agreements between bishops and the civil power. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* states that the signing of the Concordat marked the end of Gallicanism. Although the Concordat granted the Pope certain powers, it is a hollow boast to suggest that Gallicanism ceased to be a force. A strong case can be made for the fact that current historians saw the Concordat not as a new era, but rather as a continuation of Gallicanism. The document itself indicated enormous power by the French Government over the Church. Although the Concordat did grant some

towards religious instruction provides another indication that the Martin family was closely allied with the Church and Monarchist Piety.

The relationship between Napoleon and the Pope, however, would not last long. Tensions grew and finally Napoleon ordered his troops to take Rome, which was occupied in February of 1808, leaving the Pope a prisoner in his own city. This period of conflict between the Emperor and the Pope confirmed to the Church that the Emperor was not truly loyal to it but only to his own causes. Faithful Catholics expressed their opposition towards the Empire and, upon Napoleon's defeat, returned to the monarchy.

## **D. THE RETURN AND DEMISE OF MONARCHIST PIETY**

Louis XVIII became king in 1814 following the downfall of Napoleon<sup>57</sup>. His goal, along with Charles X who followed him, was to restore the Church to its former glory. It has already been stated that the Church worked against the secular goals of the Republic. In this sense, the Church and the monarchy laboured together to diminish the influence of the *Université*.

### **The Pinnacle of Monarchist Piety**

In September 1824, Charles X ascended the throne and began his program of change, calling for a solemn coronation at Reims in order to possess all the power and influence of the previous kings. He then required legislation against sacrilege, making it a crime punishable by death. Phillips describes this as of "mediaeval ferocity."<sup>58</sup> This is the clearest example of Monarchist Piety after Louis XIV.

Here again one sees an obvious indication that the Church aligned itself with the monarchy, and religious piety for all good Catholics required a Catholic king. Faithful Church members understood that loyalty to God meant loyalty to the king, and loyalty to God also meant enrolling one's children in Catholic schools. It was also during this time that some of the monarchy's previous abuses became intolerable to the average French citizen. The reasons for the Revolution became clearer and a rejection of the monarchy was at hand.

## **II. THE RISE OF LIBERAL PIETY**

Although the Ultramontane Movement is considered conservative, it began as a liberal movement. Abbé Lamennais was, in my opinion, the most significant factor leading to the formation of

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powers to the Pope, it was primarily Gallican in its philosophy and structures by which the French Government maintained control over the bishops and lower clergy.

<sup>57</sup> Louis XVIII fled Paris when Napoleon returned from exile, but after Napoleon's defeat at the battle of Waterloo (1815), the king returned to power.

<sup>58</sup> C. S. Phillips. *The Church in France 1789-1848: A Study in Revival*. (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1929), 191.



the Liberal Catholic Movement. He along with the Abbé Lacordaire and Comte de Montalembert worked to catholicise the liberalism that was so prevalent, using the printed page to proliferate their ideas in their journal *l'Avenir*. This journal was censured by the Church and their appeals were rejected as well.

Lacordaire submitted to the Church and would eventually become a Dominican preacher, while Lamennais would leave the Church altogether. Montalembert served most of his life in the French Parliament and being loyal to the Catholic Church worked to advance its causes, in particular religious education, through legal changes.

In contrast to the Catholic hierarchy, Lamennais viewed the Church as the greatest force for liberty in history. Lamennais considered the Church an agent of social change, not relying on political power to accomplish its agenda. He saw in liberty the freedom of the Church from the bonds of Gallicanism, and the ability of the Church to truly become what God had intended. Thomas R. Nevin states that Lamennais saw “that Christianity was itself true democracy; it alone recognised the equality of all souls.”<sup>59</sup> Lamennais acknowledged the importance of equality for the Church and considered this to be of even greater significance than liberty.

Although he would ultimately leave the Church, deeply disappointed, Lamennais’ followers would continue to promote his agenda. This was the early vision of Liberal Piety, a combination of the views of the Republic with an extreme loyalty to the Pope; but those who followed were few. Lamennais is referred to in Thérèse’s writings,<sup>60</sup> but the fact that he most likely died outside of the Church’s blessing would make him a distant influence.

## **A. THE CHURCH’S FIGHT AGAINST SOCIAL INJUSTICE**

Louis-Philippe became king after Charles X, who had alienated the middle class by his ultra-royalist policies, fled the country. Hence, Louis-Philippe, a Republican who was popular with the masses, was proclaimed as Monarch. Great favour was bestowed on the Church during the reign of Louis-Phillipe, such as a law allowing freedom of instruction for primary schools.

### **Liberal Piety Gains Strength**

During the July Monarchy (1830-1848), Catholicism experienced a revival. One of the contributing factors was Lacordaire’s sermons at Notre Dame in Paris. His best years there were from

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<sup>59</sup> Thomas Nevin. *Thérèse of Lisieux: God’s Gentle Warrior*. (Oxford: University Press. 2006), 13.

<sup>60</sup> Thérèse’s favourite text of Lamennais was taken from his book, “*Une voix de prison*.” She cites the same passage more than once, but with only six references to Lamennais in all of her works it is difficult to conclude her exposure to his ideas, especially since three of those references are to *The Imitation of Christ*.



1843 to 1851. The revivalist spirit all across France was evidenced by an increase in ordinations and religious orders, and by additional charities and new missions. Phillips describes the piety of this group as “full-blooded...flamboyant”<sup>61</sup>—hardly the terms ordinarily associated with holiness. But piety changes with the times, and apparently the oppressive piety of the Monarchists was replaced by something more popular and perhaps less restrictive. This was not to last, however; a new problem would cause the Ultramontanes to crush the Liberal Movement.

### Theology of Suffering and Inequality

One of the great dilemmas of this era was that Catholic theology and Monarchist Piety accepted inequality and suffering for the lower classes. Poverty was viewed as unavoidable. Hence, a new movement began to gain strength: Social Catholicism, which stated that the Church was indeed able to address the problems of society. This group was a product of Liberal Catholicism or piety, described above, and was only found amongst the elite of the Catholic Church.<sup>62</sup>

Vicomte de Melun, in 1849, portrayed the conditions of the poor in the larger cities:

The manufacturing cities, the great centers of industry, contain caves that lack light, air and space, but not inhabitants. In these hovels...human beings with countenances emaciated and wane, with mutilated limbs, with bent backs...who, in order to obtain a morsel of bread, are for long hours without repose at the mercy of a pitiless machine.<sup>63</sup>

The Socialists, especially between 1840 and 1848, mounted a strong campaign to spread the news about Socialism. As word spread, it often took on the characteristics of a religion. A more radical brand of Socialism, Communism, sometimes claimed that Jesus Christ was himself a Communist.

Liberal Piety had assumed a social flavour. It was not enough to provide the poor with a religious mass and Church tradition. Something must be done to help the starving and unemployed. Following the lead of Lamennais, Lacordaire and Montalembert, as well as others who worked to address these issues and to make the Church aware of its responsibility to help poverty-stricken individuals, Liberal Piety carried with it an agenda to care for the less fortunate, as well as to accept the changes of modernisation. The key issue socially was the reconciliation of Catholicism with democracy. Was it possible for the Catholic Church of the nineteenth century to function in a democratic world? Could they accept the ideas of liberty, the advances of science and the rights of the poor?

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<sup>61</sup> C.S. Phillips. *The Church in France 1848-1907*. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936), 283.

<sup>62</sup> Norman Ravitch. *The Church and the French Nation*. (London: Rutledge, 1990), 79-82.

<sup>63</sup> Melun, Vicomte Armand de. *De l'intervention de la société pour prévenir et soulager la misère* (Paris, 1849), 8. Cited by Ross William Collins. *Catholicism and the Second French Republic*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co, 1923, 76.

## **The Church Rejects Monarchist Views**

Although Lamennais was no longer part of the Church or possibly even a professing Christian, he had prepared much of France's population to leave behind the ideas of the monarchy. Lamennais' ideas had been expounded and popularised by his disciples, Montalembert and Lacordaire. The Church, at the midpoint of the nineteenth century, was regarded with respect, no longer identifying with the monarchy.<sup>64</sup> Sadly for the Church, these positive changes brought about by Liberal Piety would soon come to an end.

### **B. THE REJECTION OF LIBERTY**

The bishops entered the struggle for education in 1848, resuscitating the journal *l'Univers* under the direction of Louis Veuillot. An extreme Ultramontanist, he vehemently opposed Liberal Catholicism and Gallicanism. Veuillot was a staunch supporter of Louis-Napoleon at the beginning of his reign and also lobbied for the infallibility of the Pope. I consider Veuillot the most influential person in the French Church-State relations of the nineteenth century—although in this case it must be said that his influence was not always positive. His formidable writing skills and wide appeal made him a person with major sway in France from the 1840s until his death (d. 1883). The journal was read by a majority of Catholic priests and therefore had enormous influence in the shaping of attitudes. For this group of Ultramontanes, the Revolution was evil, as were liberty and science. Salvation would only be possible by a return to the monarchy. The rejection of all modern ideas caused a split amongst the Ultramontanes; individuals such as Montalembert, Dupanloup<sup>65</sup> and Lacordaire continued to support what was labelled "Liberal Catholicism." Veuillot led the other group of Monarchists.

The Revolution of 1848 began with great hope and promise, but disintegrated into violence and confusion. The Socialists had worked diligently to spread their propaganda, but many groups were afraid of them. The main issue at the time was that some very influential Church leaders supported Louis-Napoleon, rejecting the more Republican option. Many loyal Catholics, including Montalembert, used all of their influence to encourage a vote for the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte. Being a Liberal Catholic, one would not have expected this attitude from Montalembert.

Napoleon won the election by a landslide, and knowing from where his support came, the new President chose his cabinet to reflect the views of the Church. Freedom of education was accomplished in

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<sup>64</sup> C.S. Phillips. *The Church in France 1848-1907*, 22-24.

<sup>65</sup> Félix-Antoine-Philibert Dupanloup was ordained into the priesthood in 1825. In 1844, he began to work with Montalembert and others for liberty of education. He was consecrated as Bishop of Orléans in December of 1849, and in 1854 was elected to the French Academy.



1850 with the *Loi Falloux*. With these laws, freedom of education was granted for primary and secondary schools. The Church was at last winning the battle for education.

In December 1851, the new President dissolved the Assembly and scheduled an election for three weeks later in order to change the constitution, extend his rule and solidify his power. Because of the fear of Socialism, the Church as a whole did everything possible to ensure the victory of the new President. Many leading Catholic figures lent their voices to support the radical changes in the constitution and the reduction of liberties, all to confound the plans of the Socialists and ensure the will of the Catholics. It was acceptable to remove liberties so long as the Church was given the upper hand. By its endorsement of the new Emperor and his constitutional changes, the Church chose to relinquish its freedoms in exchange for favouritism from its new leader. Collins describes the great danger during this period: "Nothing could be more disastrous for her [the church] than a despotism that seemed to be exercised with the support of religion."<sup>66</sup> In retrospect, the folly of Veuillot and the Ultra-Catholic party in their support of Louis-Napoleon is patent. More frightening was the Church's loss of credibility with the Moderates in the process.

### **The Loss of Liberty is Lamented**

Veuillot continued to praise the new Emperor, but others worried over the loss of freedoms. Montalembert attacked the new regime by writing a pamphlet in October of 1852. While harshly attacked by Veuillot and others, retrospectively it can be said that Montalembert was correct. His warnings to the Church were unambiguous, but too many were under the spell of the new President, soon to be Emperor. For Veuillot and his journal, the only thing that mattered was the liberty of the Church, even if that meant the liberties were granted at the hand of a despot.

Although it may seem that the political changes during this period have little to do with holiness, this is not so; for it was a twisted sense of religious loyalty—piety—that caused the Church to reject its religious freedoms and follow after a despot. The views of the Monarchists were clearly present: rejection of liberty, secular education and socialism. In this sense, Ultramontane Piety and Monarchist Piety combined to make a hybrid of conservatism that rejected the influences of modernisation and isolated the Church into a position opposed to the Republic, which was most likely the position of the Martin family when Thérèse was born.

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<sup>66</sup> Collins, 333.



## **C. SOCIALISM REJECTS CATHOLIC PIETY**

This leads one to conclude that the Church had lost the working classes by the end of the nineteenth century or even as early as the 1870s. French Catholics continued to believe that there was no cure for poverty. Workers could only be docile and subservient, or be revolutionary. It was not possible for Catholics to imagine workers striving for a better life.

The turning point against the Church occurred when most of the Catholic elite and clergy enrolled in the Anti-Socialist Movement: “Those historians who discuss how the Church ‘lost’ the workers generally emphasise the enrolment of the Church, the clergy, and the lay Catholic elite in the anti-socialist movement beginning in 1848.”<sup>67</sup> The result of this alliance motivated men like Victor Hugo to become violently anti-clerical. It is my opinion that the attitude against the clergy was in many ways brought about by the intrusiveness of Canon Law, which controlled almost every aspect of the faithful Catholic’s life. Although Ravitch connects the elite with those who rejected the Catholic Church, it is clear from other writers that there was an element of the Bourgeoisie that remained extremely loyal to the Church and to the King in particular. This group could also be labeled Royalists, which I have referred to as Monarchist Piety.

### **Socialism Becomes the New Religion of the Poor**

For their part, the workers rejected the idea that suffering was the result of sin. According to Socialism, suffering was something that could be avoided, thus Socialism replaced the Church for the working classes: “...by the time the Church was finally able to recognise the needs of a newly but slowly industrialised society, the workers had already been evangelised by a new church, namely the socialist movement.”<sup>68</sup> The Church turned a blind eye to the needs of the poor, and in so doing, the poor left the Church en masse, preferring a new “religion” that would respond to their needs.

## **D. CHRISTIAN PIETY REJECTS ALL MODERN CONCEPTS**

In 1863, a congress was held in Belgium uniting the Liberal Catholics of Europe. Montalembert was the keynote speaker and delivered eloquent speeches on the importance of liberty. Following the Congress, Montalembert was brutally attacked by his enemies, resulting in a letter of rebuke from the

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<sup>67</sup> Ravitch, 85.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 87.

Pope. Some say that the papal Encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the Syllabus of Errors<sup>69</sup> in 1864 were a response to Montalembert and his ideas.

It was also during this period of time that the scientific community began to take large steps away from the Church. In 1862, a French translation of Darwin's work was made available in France, denying the doctrine of creation. The philosophy of positivism increased in popularity as well, stating that science provides the model for all knowledge, that everything we claim to know must be susceptible to empirical verification. Part of these scientific changes included the advent of German scholarship, which called into question the historicity of the gospels along with other key issues relating to Church doctrine. While matters of biblical scholarship are still widely debated even today, the philosophy of positivism came to an abrupt end with the debut of World War I.

It can also be said that an intellectual failure occurred in the Church during this time. Its apologetics had no sense of the impending intellectual crisis and the unbelief that came from scientific quarters did not receive any critical response from the Church in the 1870s and 1880s. Clerics of the day simply ignored intellectual issues and assumed that God would reveal the answers in due time. The pietists of the day lived in a world of ignorance and blind submission to authority.

### **The Vatican Council Declares Papal Infallibility**

The formation and actions of the first Vatican Council transpired during the last half of the 1860s. The Council met in four public sessions and 89 general congregations between December 8, 1869, and September 1, 1870, with a total of 774 prelates attending some or all of the meetings. The Council ended due to the Franco-Prussian War in July and the invasion of the Papal States by the Italian Army in September.

As soon as the subject of infallibility was introduced, it was clear that the Council was greatly divided. Significant numbers of bishops from specific countries opposed the motion: Germany, Austria/Hungary, France, and America. Nonetheless, Papal infallibility was approved on July 18, 1870. The following day marked the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War.

Much that was decided in the Council bore directly on the issue of France. The significance of Papal Infallibility was that the Gallican Church in France had been completely undercut. The Council by

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<sup>69</sup> A committee of theologians had been appointed in 1854 to address the problems of Modern Liberalism. The abovementioned Congress motivated the Pope to publish the Encyclical and condemn Naturalism, Liberty, Socialism, and Communism. The Syllabus condemned Rationalism, Pantheism, Naturalism, Scholasticism, Secret Societies, Bible Societies, Divorce, Civil Marriage and many other "modern errors." C.S. Phillips. *The Church in France 1848-1907*, 110-128.



this declaration made it clear that, from the Church's perspective, no government had the right to inhibit the Pope's communication and direction of the Catholic Church worldwide. In this sense, the decision of infallibility was more political than theological.

Another area of interest on the issue of Primacy was that bishops could no longer appeal a decision of the Pope to a General Council. The Gallican Church had always stated that the decision of the Councils superseded that of the Pope, as decided in the Council of Constance and clearly stated in the Gallican Articles. This was completely undone in Orthodox Catholicism by the decisions of Vatican I; the Gallican Church thus became heretical.

Finally, the Pope found a means to force all bishops everywhere to submit to his authority. By simply declaring Papal Infallibility, all opposing doctrinal positions allowing for liberty of opinion were immediately declared heretical. Every bishop in every country was required from that time forward to submit to the will of the Holy See. There was no longer even recourse to a council and an appeal was not an option: "The long battle between Ultramontanism and Gallicanism had been decided for good and all at the Vatican Council."<sup>70</sup> Gallicanism was dead. The French government would never again control the Catholic Church. Monarchist Piety was not dead, but was mortally wounded. Thus, during the life of Thérèse it would no longer be possible to have a French Catholic Nation controlled by a French Catholic King; however, this did not stop those loyal to the monarchy.

Under the power of the Prussian Army, the Second Empire collapsed, with Louis-Napoleon surrendering on the field of battle. The subsequent elections in France created a strong conservative majority. From 1870 to 1900, there was explosive growth in cities, as workers moved from the rural areas. With the growth of urban centres, religious piety simply disintegrated. Socialism replaced the Catholic Church in these hubs of unchurched millions. This combination of metropolitan growth and the rejection of Socialism by the Church removed its influence upon the masses.

#### **Loyalty of Certain Social Groups to the Church**

Regardless of the escalation of Socialism during the nineteenth century, there was still a large increase in the number of priests and religious congregations. Some 51,000 priests were involved in local ministry and many of the religious orders returned. By 1875, the number of nuns reached 127,000, so that there was one nun for every 180 French citizens. The same growth occurred in the "Little Seminaries," where there were 70,000 pupils, in contrast to 116,000 in the lay schools. Although this illustrates the

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<sup>70</sup> C.S. Phillips. *The Church in France 1848-1907*, 164.



loyalty of Army officers to the Church, the more interesting statistic is that 40 percent of the nation's children attended Catholic schools. Certain social groups defined holiness late in the nineteenth century by attendance at a Catholic school and joining a convent. Even as late as the 1880s, religious schools were very popular for certain groups. In France, "three-fifths of all the girls were taught by the sisters of 500 different congregations."<sup>71</sup> This loyalty to the Church's schools and religious orders would be seen as a continuation of Monarchist Piety. It also reflected the mindset of the Martin family.

### **A Time for Change Fast Approaching**

Although the Church can be blamed for its blind rejection of liberty, the Republicans can be blamed for their inability to separate a need to control the Church from a strong hatred of the Church. A neutral ground was needed to allow freedom in the Church without its destruction. It was therefore necessary for the Church to accept the idea of pluralism and for the government to see the Church as functioning primarily outside of its control.

In terms of piety, the Monarchists were enjoying their last surge of popularity. Theirs was a mixed sort of piety, unlike that of Louis XIV or even the Restoration. The influence of the constitution and legislature were gaining strength. Politically, the country was soon to be permanently Republican. Piety would shift by force of circumstances to a more liberal stance, as evidenced in the events of the last thirty years of the nineteenth century.

## **E. MONARCHISTS AGAIN REJECT LIBERTY**

As the century progressed, the Church began to look back upon the Confessional State as its best years. The Gallicans and the Church hierarchy joined forces at every possible occasion to submit the Church to the State. Conservative Catholics and Voltaireian Moderates set aside their differences out of fear of Socialism.

### **The Call for a King**

In 1870, an Assembly was formed and began the creation of a new constitution. This conservative Assembly wanted to establish a new monarchy, with the Comte de Chambord as King. Dupanloup worked to convince the heir to the throne that he should compromise somewhat and re-establish the monarchy, but it was not to be. By 1879, all branches of government were controlled by the Republicans. Now it was time for revenge; the Republic viewed the Church as the enemy. The Church had

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<sup>71</sup> John McManners. *Church and State in France 1870-1914*. (London: SPCK, 1972), 21-22.

been identified with Royalism and the day of reckoning was at hand. In 1881, the Republicans won 457 of 557 seats.

During the decade of the 1870s, Freemasonry, an organisation deeply opposed to the Church, was experiencing remarkable growth. Phillips describes Freemasonry as “a movement which in continental countries...is bitterly and militantly antagonistic to revealed religion, and is, in fact, the chief focus of opposition to the Catholic Church.”<sup>72</sup> Membership rapidly increased during this decade and included the most influential political figures of the day. For them, the foremost obstacle to the final and complete victory of the Revolution was the Church. The best way to end its influence would be to destroy its power in terms of education, and so the Masonic lodges developed a program based on free, required and secular education. In 1879, Jules Ferry began a program of legislation to complete the Masonic agenda. The actions of the Freemasons and, in particular, Jules Ferry, clearly illustrate the Republican’s reaction concerning the Church’s efforts to control education. In the 1880s, the Church definitively lost the Battle of Education. The State was again, much like during the Revolution, in the process of crushing the Church, only this time it was slower, more deliberate and with lasting consequences. From this point on, the State reduced the control and influence of the Church until the separation of Church and State, which occurred in 1905.

## **F. TRANSITION TO LIBERAL PIETY**

Lamennais was the first person in France to propose trusting in God to bring a revolutionary change to modern society. The Church rejected his prophetic vision and required faithful Catholics to remain subservient to the yoke of the State. But the time was ripe at last for the Church to accept some of the ideas of Liberal Piety; they had no choice. While casting off of the Monarchist yoke would not be complete until the twentieth century, the winds of change were blowing.

### **The Catholic Church Begins to Recognise the Needs of the Poor**

In 1871, Comte Albert de Mun formed the first *Cercles Catholiques d'Ouvrier*. This group had good motives, but regarded the workers as lesser citizens who were probably considered equal in the eyes of God, but not in the affairs of men. The limitation of the Circles was that they did not permit or encourage the workers to join together to fight for their own rights; it was a patronising organisation. Although de Mun was neither a priest nor a monk, I view him as a key transitional figure in bringing the Catholic Church to accept early Liberal Piety, following after the ideas of Lamennais and his successors.

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<sup>72</sup> C.S. Phillips. *The Church in France 1848-1907*, 185.



de Mun combined his Catholic faith with a concern for the less fortunate and openness towards some ideas of modernisation.

Following the work of de Mun were the efforts of Harmel, who worked to develop Social Catholicism beyond the point of paternalism. His goal was to see the workers form their own associations. La Tour du Pin, another Liberal Catholic, pushed the Circles to new limits in striving for a standard wage that was liveable, as well as for unemployment and retirement benefits.

The work of these Catholics was a starting point and moved in the right direction, but it was unfortunately too little, too late. The hurting masses were not attracted to these modest-sized groups, and so continued to move in the direction of Socialism. These movements and this period of time marked the beginning of an acceptance of the ideas of Liberal Piety by many Catholics.

### **Pope Leo XIII and the Rise of Liberal Piety**

Pope Pius died in February 1878 and was replaced by Leo XIII, famous for the *Ralliement*,<sup>73</sup> an attempt by the pontiff to encourage an acceptance of the Republic by the Church. What could be done to bring faithful Catholics to support the Republic and what could be done to persuade the Republicans that the Church had changed? In November 1885, the Pope issued the Encyclical *Immortale Dei* as a response to the numerous questions facing the Church concerning Modern Society. His goal was that Catholics would finally accept the Republic as the choice of the people, however, most Church leaders in France were unaffected by the Pope's pronouncement. In 1888, the Pope issued another Encyclical explaining issues relating to human freedom.

By the election of 1889, the Church, to its credit, began to recognise that the country no longer wanted a monarchy. Real change took place in 1891 with the issuance of another Encyclical, *Rerum novarum*, denouncing the exploitation of workers by capitalistic businesses. McManners says of this Encyclical:

Cautious document as it is, *Rerum novarum* looks out towards vast horizons and forward to a distant future. At one blow it ended the secret assumption of so many propertied Christians that almsgiving was a sufficient ransom to pay for personal comfort. Properly read from the point of view of personal obligation, it implied a duty of participation in organized action to improve social conditions and to use political means to ensure State action on behalf of the underprivileged classes.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> The *Ralliement* was a "rallying cry" by the Pope in order to bring the Church to accept the issues of modernisation, including democracy, liberty, the rights of workers, and all forms of legitimate government.

<sup>74</sup> McManners, 88.

The theological position in the past considered poverty unchangeable, to be endured by the wealthy who would possibly give small financial gifts to assuage their own conscience. The Encyclical, however, clarified that almsgiving was insufficient and that Christians must actively pursue a structured program to assist the needy. The Pope even went so far as to recommend a minimum wage. For most members of the Church, the Pope's instruction had little effect, since they considered Socialism as evil as the problem of poverty itself.

France had for so long viewed conversion as something accomplished nationally. By staking their hopes on a converted nation, they failed to see the importance of individual transformation and individual holiness. In losing the battle to make France a "Catholic" nation, the Church lost the battle for the souls of the French people as well. The Catholic hierarchy missed the advantages offered by liberty in the lives of changed individuals and sacrificed individual piety on the altar of Gallican control.

### **The Pope's Changes are Rejected during the Dreyfus Affair**

In 1886 Edouard Drumont published his anti-Jewish book, *La France Juive*, in which Jews were blamed for the many evils in Europe; Judaism and Freemasonry were said to be identical. Although a minor offence at the time, it set the stage for the enormously significant dilemma that would follow.

The mid-1890s witnessed the beginning of the Dreyfus Affair. While too drawn out to be fully developed here, and too late to be of direct influence in the life of Thérèse, important factors are nonetheless evident throughout this event. In short, a Jewish Army officer was wrongly accused and found guilty of treason. The basis for the accusations was later proven to be false, but the case strictly divided the nation along lines of previous loyalties. Church leaders in stereotypical fashion rejected the modern ideas that had been accepted by many faithful Catholics. One thing became very clear throughout the entire drama: the Army as a whole was loyal to the Church and vice-versa. The reason for this, simply stated, was because the Jesuits had educated many of the officers.

In terms of piety, the relationship of the Army to the Church is important. In times of difficulty, they would always stand up for the Church or identify with the Monarch. In this situation, the Church identified once more with the side that rejected liberty and opposed the Republic. Religious piety was again mixed with bad politics, giving the Church a negative reputation in the eyes of most Frenchmen. The Dreyfus Affair continued to affect the Church into the twentieth century and became a watershed for Church-State relations in France.



## **The Short-Term Failure of the *Ralliement***

By the end of the century, it was evident that the *Ralliement* and Liberal Piety had failed as a political movement in France, though perhaps not completely. Theoretically, the Pope required Catholics to state that any government could work with the Church, but the average French citizen did not accept this, as many were still loyal to the idea of a Monarch. Even if Leo XIII's plans were not initially successful, if one looks into the next century, one can distinguish in the decisions made in the 1920s that this visionary Pope eventually brought reform in the Church.

Pope Leo XIII died in July of 1903, but his successor Pius X, often considered a saint, was not as worldly wise. Pius X was hardly a diplomat and had no concern for the plight of the workers or for any of the social issues of that time. The separation of Church and State came to France in 1905, and although that date exceeds the scope of this chapter, it is central to understanding the Catholic Church in the twentieth century.

## **CONCLUSION**

When examining the historical and cultural context of the nineteenth century, one observes the dominance of Monarchist Piety in conflict with the Republic and the accompanying liberties. As the century progressed, the Republican ideas, as well as modernisation appreciably influenced the Church's perspective, as well as its views on piety. Monarchist Piety persisted through the century—a conservative view of the Church staunchly committed to Gallican principles and the need for a king, opposed to any modernising influence.

As a result of numerous errors in judgement during the 1800s, the Church became openly opposed to liberty, modernisation and intellectual progress. It identified with anti-Republican ideals both at the Restoration and at the Second Empire to continue its Gallican privileges and control, losing the battle for the heart of the people. Immobilised by past ideals, the Church appeared unwilling or unable to free itself from the grip of Monarchist values. In France, the Catholic Church alienated itself from Republican ideals and lost credibility with those seeking to bring Republican liberties to the nation.

The concepts of Liberal Piety were introduced in the 1830s by a small group of men, but did not find general acceptance in France. Gallican tradition combined with the Concordat of 1801 hindered the Church from accepting any type of reform. It was the rise of Liberal Piety in the 1830s and 1840s, and again under the *Ralliement* of Leo XIII, that caused some members of the Catholic Church to recognise the need for change. Certain modern ideas were sound and worthy of broad acceptance, such as liberty

and equality. Others, such as biblical criticism, required a studied, intelligent response from the Church, not the naïve, passive reply that had been presented. Further, the Church must develop a structure that addressed the poor. And finally, the Church needed to learn to work within the Republic. It no longer held a monopoly, which required it to accept pluralism and liberty as the wave of the future.

Beyond the rejection of liberty, the next most significant failure of the Church was its apathy in addressing the plight of the poverty-stricken and justifying the inequalities between the rich and the poor. This general acceptance of the plight of the poor was part of the *ancien régime*, the monarchy. Throughout the Revolution and into the nineteenth century, it appears that the Church hierarchy, in particular the bishops, fought against the revolutionary ideas of equality. The obvious reason for this was that their influence and wealth, as well as that of the Bourgeoisie, would be greatly diminished if all individuals were declared as equal. They had much to lose and little to gain if the average worker was elevated to a stature where the employer no longer could control him with the threat of unemployment and lost wages.

#### **Implications for the Study of Thérèse**

Thérèse's family was clearly linked to Monarchist Piety. The connection to the Army via both grandfathers, as well as the leanings of her parents to the religious life, demonstrates this tie. In addition, both parents went on personal religious pilgrimages, and all of their daughters attended Catholic schools and eventually entered religious life. One can only imagine their loyalty within a time of immense conflict between the Church and the State, as summarised by Bernard Bro:

Thérèse est née le 2 janvier 1873. Alors qu'elle n'a que six ans, en juin 1879, c'est le projet de loi contre les ordres religieux enseignant. En mars 1880, ce sont les décrets anticléricaux en France et la dissolution de la Compagnie de Jésus... Cette même année ; alors qu'elle a sept ans ; deux cent soixante et un couvents vont être fermés en France... 28 mars 1882, ce sont les lois anticléricales en France et l'interdiction de donner un enseignement religieux dans des locaux scolaires. En 1894... Les carmélites de Lisieux vont avoir en permanence sous leur paillasse une petite boîte appelée « caisse de persécution », où sont rangés quelques habits civils au cas où elles devraient partir rapidement.<sup>75</sup>

In terms of economics, the Martin family was part of the Bourgeoisie, not in that they were open to the liberal ideas of the day, but in that they rejected the needs of the poor. Their social standing and theological persuasion made them insensitive to the cause of the less fortunate. Otherwise stated, they were not Socialists.

The setting of the final decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a dismantling of the Church by the Third Republic. It was not like the Revolution, violent and unorganised. Now, it was almost national in scale, well planned and deliberate. Hence, the Martins found themselves a defensive



minority—still loyal to the Church, but with all of the Monarchist trappings having been deliberately removed. All of the ways in which they would have traditionally manifested their piety were either no longer available or under severe attack. The monarchy was gone, the religious educational system was being dismantled, and the Republicans and Socialists had gained control of all branches of government.

With Monarchist Piety no longer a viable option for showing one's commitment to God, how could one demonstrate one's devotion? What system of piety would still work in a country now overrun by Republicans and Socialists? The best option for Thérèse in her cultural setting, and the sole option in her family, was to enter a convent. not only a sign of devotion to God, but also a declaration of loyalty to the Pope and the Church. In so doing, she also ignored the plight of the poor. This conflict between the affluent and the underprivileged concerns this study since the division of social class was a problem that Thérèse faced, but did not address. Her response to the social struggle of her day was to join a convent, isolate herself from the world and take a vow of poverty—symbolically meaningful but, practically-speaking, meaningless. In the Martin family, however, the convent was the only acceptable choice.

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<sup>75</sup> Bernard Bro. *Thérèse de Lisieux*. (Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1996), 29-30.

# CHAPTER 3 – Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897)

## SECTION 1 – PERSONAL HISTORY

### I. CHILDHOOD

#### INTRODUCTION

Few people have received as many accolades, especially in the Catholic Church, as Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. From the respected Roman Catholic theologian Hans Urs Von Balthasar, we read:

“...Whoever might take the trouble to read in an unbiased way Thérèse’s authentic writings...will be astonished at the freshness and genuineness one immediately encounters...in recent times no canonised saint is known to me who possessed such a poetic capacity as Thérèse of Lisieux.”<sup>76</sup>

Karl Rahner, the famous Jesuit, however, would not agree: “Beaucoup de choses en la personne de cette sainte et dans ses écrits m’irritent ou tout simplement m’ennuient. Et si l’on commençait à traduire ce qui presque m’écœure afin que ce soit compréhensible, cela n’expliquerait pas pourquoi on en a pris la peine.”<sup>77</sup> Even those who might have been sympathetic to her at times were not impressed when comparing her with other women in her day.

Thérèse of Lisieux remains one of the most popular saints of all time. Her autobiography has been translated into more than 60 languages and is the most read book in France not including the Bible. It was by popular demand on the part of Catholic Christians all over the world that the Congregation for the Causes of Saints was forced to ignore the 50 Years Rule and begin the process of her beatification. She was thus beatified by Pope Pius XI in 1923 and canonised two years later, a mere 28 years following her death, the shortest period ever at that time in history.

#### 1. Autobiography

This public movement was the result of Thérèse’s autobiography that included “practical lessons on convent life.” Although longer than most obituary notices that were typically sent out by her convent, over 700,000 copies of her autobiography were in print by 1960 along with two-and-one-half million copies of the abridged version. The book and the massive outpouring of miracles referred to as the “shower of roses” account for her remarkable popularity even today.

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<sup>76</sup> Hans Urs Von Balthasar. *The Von Balthasar Reader*. Translated by Robert J. Daly and Fred Lawrence. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), 398-399.

<sup>77</sup> Karl Rahner, *Christliche Innerlichkeit*, 1973. Cited by Bernard Bro, 7.



Her manuscripts will be addressed later, but Ida Friederike Görres declares that the changes to the original manuscripts did not change the meaning of her writing and concludes: “Thus, the seven thousand corrections are, ultimately, without significance... In this respect, the mountain of critical research has brought forth a mouse.”<sup>78</sup> However, I would strongly disagree with Görres on this issue and provide explanation in Section 4 of this chapter.

## 2. The Heritage

Both of Thérèse’s grandfathers were military men who had served with Napoleon. The importance of this heritage has already been demonstrated. Thérèse’s father, Louis Martin, a meticulous man with an artistic personality, was a gentle soul desiring to join a monastery. When he applied, however, he was not allowed entrance because he had not learned Latin. Thérèse’s mother, Azélie Guérin, more affectionately known as Zélie, also had aspirations for the monastic life. She went to a convent with her mother, but was also refused entrance. The key at this point is that both parents failed to enter the monastery. As a result, the Martin residence was extremely religious and greatly revered “la vie religieuse.”

An arranged marriage, Louis and Zélie met at the age of 35 and 27 respectively, and were wed three months later. What is so astonishing about their marriage is that they agreed to live without sexual union - and succeeded for ten months!<sup>79</sup> The example for their unique commitment was the Virgin Mary and Joseph, who lived without sexual union until the birth of Jesus (Protestant perspective) or their entire lives (Catholic perspective). The Martins consented to sexual relations at the encouragement of the local priest, but continued to dream of a monastic life fulfilled through their children.

By 1870, Louis had closed his clock and jewellery business to help his wife with hers. Her lace business thrived and a steady income resulted, with annual revenues said to have been 8,000 to 10,000 French Francs per year. This was an amazing income when one realises that the average government worker earned about 1000 francs per year. The Martins had clearly arrived in the “middle class.” They were able to pay for boarding school for all of their daughters and take extended vacations. They had become *bourgeois* both financially and psychologically.

It is ironic that neither Monsieur nor Madame Martin saw any conflict between their work and their religious holiness, even though they both made their living off of the luxury and vanity of the

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<sup>78</sup> Ida Friederike Görres. *The Hidden Face: A Study of St Thérèse of Lisieux*. (New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1959), 18,20.

<sup>79</sup> Bernard Bro, 32.

affluent. This fact illustrates the influence of culture on one's perspective of holiness. Only the wealthiest of people could afford their wares, thus, perhaps without intentionally doing so, they were supporting the class divide which created the social problems in France. In their defence, one could say that the division between one's work and one's private devotion was typical of the middle-class in France of this epoch.

The Martin children were born in the following order: the oldest, Marie, was born in 1860; Pauline, in 1861; Léonie, in 1863; Hélène, who died at the age of five, was born in 1864; Louis, in 1866, who died at five months; Jean-Baptist, in 1867, died at eight months; Céline, in 1870; Thérèse (the first) died at two months; and finally Thérèse, in 1873. With the death of four of their children, it is not surprising that Zélie Martin took on a rather pessimistic view of life.

One can see the religious commitment in Thérèse's parents in their daily attendance at the 5:30 A.M. morning mass; they were extremely devout in their commitment and daily practice of religion. Zélie Martin had an obsession for holiness and sanctity. Her goal was for each of her children to become a saint. In my opinion, her sister Dosithée was equally obsessed, and perhaps even more so. Dosithée was a member of a local convent, Visitandines du Mans, where all of the Martin girls received at least some education. She had some harsh views about suffering and the accumulation of merit even for small children: "Dieu a soif de souffrance et de sang ; la souffrance des petits enfants elle-même l'intéresse comme source de mérites et de gloire."<sup>80</sup> Their theology of suffering and moral perfectionism did not end there; the entire upbringing of the Martin children was based on this same theology of suffering and sacrifice.

#### **A. THE FIRST PERIOD – MANUSCRIPT A (Birth to the Death of Mme Martin)**

Thérèse, in her autobiography, divides her life into three parts. The first period was from the beginning of self-awareness to the death of her mother. She had many vivid memories to share, but her early childhood was primarily revealed through Zélie Martin's letters. Some quotations in her autobiography are especially interesting, as well as some found in other histories about her life. It is from these quotations that one can most accurately form a picture of Thérèse's early years. Most of the information mentioned herein comes from her autobiography, the section commonly known as Manuscript A. More will be said of this manuscript and the events that produced its writing in Section 4 of this chapter. This is the first of the three well-known manuscripts to her autobiography, with Manuscripts B and C to follow.



Thérèse was born January 2, 1873, and was described by her mother as a beautiful and happy child: "...elle est belle; elle sourit déjà."<sup>81</sup> Within days of her birth, Thérèse was near death, saved only by the breastfeeding provided by a nurse, Rose. From the age of three months to the age of fifteen months, Rose raised Thérèse with her own family on her farm. Only occasionally was Thérèse brought home to visit her mother and family.

Her mother's busyness combined with the nursing—and hence bonding—with another person is perhaps the beginning point for explaining Thérèse's many psychological difficulties during her childhood. Being gone for an extended time makes clear why Thérèse never bonded psychologically with her mother, a bond which normally takes place between seven and ten months of age, according to psychologist Richard Gross.<sup>82</sup>

Thérèse returned to her maternal home after more than a year with her nurse. From this point on, she was actually raised by her two older sisters. Thérèse's personality was already forming and she was said to be very bright as a child, beyond the intelligence of her sisters when they were at that same age. She had a very active conscience and could be adorable, but she could be unmanageable as well. Her childhood temper-tantrums are familiar stories.

At this early age, the formation of certain religious habits also began. Thérèse had an inner tendency and desire to please those around her, including God, as well as the necessary encouragement from her sisters to bring this about: "On apprend à cette enfant de quatre ans la fameuse méthode des « pratiques », les actes de vertu dont on fait le compte sur un petit chapelet ; elle s'y passionne."<sup>83</sup> Thérèse would add a bead or take one away depending on whether her behaviour had been bad or good: "Céline et Thérèse compteront leurs victoires à la façon dont elles font le bilan de leurs notes d'orthographe ou de calcul. Et cela devient pour les deux bambines un des sujets de conversation des plus animées."<sup>84</sup> This quest for virtue, through the method of counting acts of virtue, came from her mother and her aunt, but was solidified by her sisters. Out of this milieu of hyper-religiosity, Thérèse, not surprisingly, developed an extremely strong conscience. It is obvious that such practices contained a measure of pharisaism.

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<sup>80</sup> Jean-François Six. *La Véritable Enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux*. (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971), 67.

<sup>81</sup> Letter from Mme Martin to her sister-in-law, January 16, 1873. Cited by Jean-François Six. *La Véritable Enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux*, 87.

<sup>82</sup> Richard Gross, Richard, Rob McIlveen, Hugh Coolican, Alan Clamp, Julia Russell. *Psychology: a New Introduction*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2000), 44-45.

<sup>83</sup> Jean-François Six. *La Véritable Enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux*, 101.

<sup>84</sup> M.-D. Poinset. *Thérèse de Lisieux*. (Tours, France: Imprimerie Mame, 1971), 48.

Stories portray a child who was both ever so spoiled yet firmly disciplined. Some would suggest that this should exclude her from sainthood, but in Carmel “the greater the youthful pride, the greater the triumph in the sister’s overcoming it.”<sup>85</sup> No one denies that she was wilful, spoiled and precocious, but not to the exclusion of sainthood in the accepted wisdom of her day, as she supposedly conquered these imperfections.

Thérèse’s mother, Zélie, spoke of her own suffering and the future help there would be in purgatory as a result thereof. Thus purgatory was a foundational truth in Thérèse’s young life. Initially, Zélie Martin wanted to endure the pain of her illness (breast cancer) in order to reduce her time in purgatory; however, as time progressed, she desired to remain in “this life” in order to be with her children. On July 30, her suffering increased as the cancer ravaged her body, without any medication to relieve the pain. She passed away just after midnight the morning of August 28, 1877. The record of her letters indicates that Zélie suffered greatly. It is impossible that four-year-old Thérèse was not affected by this event. Their grief and loss seem to have been dealt with in silence, and Thérèse wrote little about her mother’s death, merely a few paragraphs.

Soon thereafter, Thérèse chose another mother figure, her sister Pauline. It might be that she was simply following her sister Céline. Pauline was the perfect choice, not only because of their affinity from Thérèse’s early childhood, but also because she represented her mother in so many ways, physically, emotionally, and spiritually—perhaps even an improved version of her mother, who was always so occupied with her business.

## **B. THE SECOND PERIOD (age 4-1/2 Years to 14 Years)**

Thérèse describes the change she experienced in her character following the death of her mother. Regardless of any preference for Pauline, Madame Martin’s death still had an enormous impact on this overly sensitive and wilful child.<sup>86</sup> Her mother’s brother Isidore Guérin was given guardianship over the Martin girls, despite the fact that the father was still living and personally responsible for the family investments. As a result, the whole family moved to Lisieux to be near the Guérin family.

In Lisieux, with very few responsibilities, Louis Martin devoted himself to his daughters and to maintaining the lifestyle of a monk. In her autobiography, Thérèse recounts the story of a vision that occurred either in the summer of 1879 or 1880. It was prophetic in nature because it vividly described the

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<sup>85</sup> Nevin, 180, 152.

<sup>86</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*. (Paris: Editions du Cerf et Desclée De Brouwer, 1998), 35.



handicap that would be endured by her father, resulting in his death. The renowned vision was shown to demonstrate her prophetic gift from earliest childhood.

Thérèse began school in the fall of 1881. In French schools of the day, students were divided not by age but by ability. While she was intellectually advanced, she was behind emotionally and socially. This was demonstrated by her inability to play games with the other children, a fact she admitted. It is important to note that all of her sisters had attended the same school without incident. But Thérèse was unable to adjust to daily school life. This fact alone gives cause to question her psychological stability.

Along with a lack of social skills, Thérèse was quite pampered. At the age of 11, for example, she still did not know how to fix her own hair. Before going to the abbey, she had been daily cared for by her older sisters, dressed and coiffed. She was also never required to do any household chores. The summary statement concerning Thérèse's life as a child is that she simply needed a lot of attention! Even more, she had an endless need for affirmation.

Since Thérèse was not very good at interacting with other children, she invented her own "game" after school that better suited her personality: being a hermit. While her schoolmates played, she would bury the dead birds she found below the trees in the schoolyard. She and some likeminded friends created an entire cemetery for their "petits oiseaux." Thérèse would tell stories using her fecund imagination. Her invented games illustrate her limited social adjustment, but her storytelling gives insight into her keen intellect, as well as her future talent for writing. It also illustrates her desire to be the centre of attention, a personal need that contradicts later images of her humility and smallness.

Thérèse resumed her social isolation when a friend rejected her: the one time she reached out to someone outside of her small circle of family relations, she was pushed aside. As a result, she forever closed the door to friendship and mistakenly used this experience as a spiritual principle that only God could be her friend. I would suggest that she never truly understood brotherly love on a human level. Even later on at the convent her relationships were forced and structured; isolation was the rule of the day. Her only close friends were family members.

When Thérèse learned that Pauline would soon be entering the convent of Carmel, she was shocked. As Pauline explained what Carmel would be like, Thérèse also sensed this was God's call for her life as well. In my opinion, it would be difficult to view this as a legitimate calling from God, considering the emotional pain that Thérèse was going through. Even though she confessed that this calling was only for Jesus, it seems clear that, at this time of crisis, it was more likely an attempt to maintain the

relationship with the person she most admired. More and more, the theme of suffering and sacrifice took root in her life: “En un instant je compris ce qu’était la vie, jusqu’alors je ne l’avais pas vue si triste, mais elle m’apparut dans toute sa réalité, je vis qu’elle n’était qu’une souffrance et qu’une séparation continuelle.”<sup>87</sup> For Thérèse, “sanctity becomes a synonym for suffering.”<sup>88</sup>

Soon she was having continual headaches; then, an illness which she attributed to the work of demons: “La maladie dont je fus atteinte venait certainement du démon, furieux de votre entrée au Carmel il voulut se venger sur moi du tort que notre famille devait lui faire dans l’avenir...”<sup>89</sup> The real reason for her illness is revealed in a conversation with her Uncle. Alone with him one evening, he began to talk about his sister, Thérèse’s mother. She began to sob as he spoke. The conversation put her in such a state that she apparently had some kind of nervous breakdown and became, in effect, delirious: “...Je disais et je faisais des choses que je ne pensais pas, presque toujours je paraissais en délire disant des paroles qui n’avaient pas de sens et cependant je suis sûre de n’avoir pas été privée un seul instant de l’usage de ma raison...”<sup>90</sup> The doctors arrived, but they were reluctant to state a diagnosis. Both Ida Friederike Görres and Thomas Nevin identified it as a common nervous disorder of the day. Nevin called it St. Vitus’ dance or Sydenham’s chorea, a disease caused by a lesion in the brain.<sup>91</sup> Thérèse claimed to have been healed by a vision of a statue of the Virgin Mary coming to life, vision that I would question. Considering the hallucinations during her illness, it seems possible that her vision of the statue could have also been a hallucination. The issue here is that she was healed, which raises an even more important question: Can faith from a psychologically-induced vision produce a miracle? Perhaps Thérèse has much more in common with Joan of Arc than one would care to admit.

Görres accepts the demonic influence of Thérèse’s illness, as well as the psychological need produced by separation from Pauline. Although there may have been an organic disease which attacked Thérèse, it would be very shortsighted to ignore the psychological component of this unusual malady. My conclusion is that she had a psychological breakdown caused by the loss of her “second mother”—a crisis exacerbated by her uncle recounting the loss of her mother. In her healing, Thérèse possibly realised that Pauline was not the only one who could be a mother to her, and eventually turned to the Virgin as a substitute mother figure.

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<sup>87</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*, 1998, 54.

<sup>88</sup> Nevin, 185.

<sup>89</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*, 1998, 56.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>91</sup> Nevin, 254.



Thérèse also developed her own style of meditation at a very young age:

Ils étaient pour moi de beaux jours; ceux où mon roi chéri m'emmenait à la pêche avec lui... Quelque fois j'essayais de pêcher avec ma petite ligne, mais je préférais aller m'asseoir seule sur l'herbe fleurie, alors mes pensées étaient bien profondes et sans savoir ce que c'était (que) de méditer, mon âme se plongeait dans une réelle oraison...<sup>92</sup>

Her meditation is admired by all who have written about her, but in reality this practice is not unique for a child who was isolated from culture and friends in a setting that only honoured the religious life.

Later on, when Thérèse was trying to enter Carmel at the age of 14, her father spoke with the Father Superior of Carmel, Monsieur Delatroëtte. Monsieur Martin revealed by his words how closely he related the salvation of a person to their experience as a nun or monk. It was as if one's entering the monastery or convent guaranteed one's salvation: "Je suis bien heureux, voilà déjà deux de mes filles dont le salut est assuré ; j'en ai encore une qui n'a que quatorze ans et qui déjà brûle de les suivre."<sup>93</sup>

As Thérèse prepared to receive her second communion (a year later), she was struck with another illness that seems to have also been psychological in origin. It was less extreme in that she was able to continue functioning for all external appearances, but was closely related to her times of confession and the sins that she had to confess. One could also label it as an overactive conscience or scruples. What was the underlying cause of her attack of conscience? Jean-François Six concludes that it was the result of very poor self-esteem. I would add an enormous load of guilt and a daunting habit of introspection as well.

During this same time, Thérèse realised that Marie was also planning to enter the convent. Apparently, Marie felt that Céline was old enough to run the home. Marie's leaving pushed Thérèse into a psychological isolation: "Aussitôt que j'appris la détermination de Marie, je résolus de (ne) prendre plus aucun plaisir sur la terre..."<sup>94</sup> She felt no other option but to turn to her four brothers and sister already in heaven for support, a poignant image of the depth of her isolation and loneliness.

What Thérèse called her "conversion" happened on Christmas Day in 1886, and is referred to as her "complete conversion." Thérèse credited Jesus with her miraculous healing and change of character. He is surely capable, but in view of her emotional and social problems, perhaps a psychological explanation is more fitting. It may have been the first time that Papa showed any true weariness concerning Thérèse's childish behaviour and, to maintain his trust and blessing, she chose to change herself into what he was desired, namely, for her to finally grow up and stop acting like a spoiled child.

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<sup>92</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d'une Ame*, 1998, 36-37.

<sup>93</sup> M.-D. Poinsenet. *Thérèse de Lisieux*, 185.

Perhaps that is what Pauline and Marie communicated as well, without words, by leaving the home and poor Thérèse behind. One positive aspect of this event was that Thérèse did return to some of the joy and spontaneity of her early childhood. Her autobiography would lead one to believe that all of Thérèse's problems were now overcome, that in one instant, one evening, she was able to remove from herself an overactive conscience and become a mature follower of Christ.

Not long after this Christmas event, Thérèse was looking at a picture of Jesus on the cross, and was moved by the blood dripping from one of his hands and by the words, "I thirst." This incident made clear her life's purpose: she would satisfy the thirst of her Saviour by the saving of souls. Her conviction was that she could be involved in the saving souls through prayer and suffering by and for Jesus Christ. She first experienced the joy of evangelism and saving souls from certain damnation in the case of Pranzini, an important event for Thérèse because it confirmed that she could save souls by means of prayer, and that by entering the convent this ministry of evangelism would proceed with force.

The story of Thérèse's entrance into Carmel and her travels to meet the Pope are renowned elements of her autobiography and need not be repeated here. Her request before the Pope became widely known, aided by the publishing of an article in the daily *l'Univers* on November 24, 1887: "Parmi les pèlerins se trouvait une jeune fille de quinze ans qui a demandé au Saint-Père la permission de pouvoir entrer tout de suite au couvent pour s'y faire religieuse."<sup>95</sup> When Thérèse arrived back in Lisieux, she was the talk of the town. Although not her desired goal, she was making progress.

The Martin family arrived home on December 2. Thérèse's hope was still to enter Carmel on Christmas Day; however, she did not hear from her sister until January 1 that word had been received from the bishop on December 28 granting permission to immediately enter Carmel. The Reverend Mother decided to put off her entrance until Easter, perhaps to mollify somewhat the feelings of the Reverend Father who was quite opposed to Thérèse's coming in the first place. Pauline agreed that it would be better for Thérèse to begin after the severe Lenten fast. So began her life at the convent.

## **II. THE CONVENT YEARS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The convent where Thérèse served was founded in 1838 by two nuns from the Poitiers Carmel. One of them, Mother Geneviève of St. Teresa, was 81 years old when Thérèse arrived. The Carmel

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<sup>94</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d'une Ame*, 1998, 81.

<sup>95</sup> Cited by Jean-François Six. *La Véritable Enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux*, 270.



Convents were committed to prayer in its many forms. Most of the day was filled with prayer, worship, the Divine Office, and meditation. An average day would include six to seven hours of these spiritually-focused tasks. The rest of the time was filled with the requirements necessary for their community to exist.

Standard monastic vows were required of all women hoping to join the convent: poverty, chastity and obedience. One more important aspect in the life of the Carmel, or the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, as it is officially called, was that the nuns were required to live in silence, only to be broken twice daily, during the time of recreation and after meals. Thérèse carefully followed this rule, but was not as mindful of other rules, such as writing letters. Standard Carmelite rules allowed only one letter per year, which was to be sent to the closest family members. Meanwhile, Thérèse wrote more than 200 letters in her nine years at the convent!

### **A. MANUSCRIPT A (Continued)**

Thérèse entered the convent at Carmel on April 9, 1888. She crossed the threshold and the heavy door closed behind her. Mother Marie de Gonzague led her to her room, which measured 2,10 m by 3,70 m. Each nun was given a new name and an epithet. Thérèse's name actually did not change, but the two epithets given were, "of the child Jesus" and "of the Holy Face." The meaning of the first is simple and fit well into her "little way," that is, the amazing reality of divinity becoming human weakness. The second derives from a long Catholic tradition to honour the Face of Christ.

Two months later, the Father Pichon came to the convent for the profession of St. Marie du Sacré-Cœur.<sup>96</sup> During this time, Thérèse had the opportunity for a general confession with him and received some very consoling words, that is, she had never committed a mortal sin. She had been overwhelmed with fear concerning mortal sin, another indication that her theology was primarily one of fear and punishment.

Thérèse was required to work with all of the other sisters, as was everyone who entered Carmel. She was initiated into the times of prayer, singing and meditation. As one could suppose from her upbringing, she was not skilled in labour, such as cleaning and sewing. It was a rigorous schedule. Another expectation of life at Carmel was complete obedience to one's superiors. Thérèse was required to kiss the ground at each meeting of her Mother Superior and she was disciplined for every failure. Yet Thérèse admired this stern woman.

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<sup>96</sup> This took place May 28, 1888. Date from Guy Gaucher. *Histoire d'Une Vie: Thérèse Martin*. (Paris: Les Editions Du Cerf, 1982), 97.

It is hard to imagine that such a severe person could have shaped Thérèse's life. The Mother Superior apparently treated Thérèse differently than the others, with more harshness, but also with a specific goal, that of shaping her into a model nun. This unlikely pairing seems to have produced a good result, as far as the Catholic Church is concerned.

Thérèse was mistreated by the other sisters as well. Céline reports these abuses, although she could not have observed them firsthand. Thérèse never complained, so she was given leftovers to eat. She may have had nothing on her plate but a few herring heads or something else left in the kitchen for days. Recalling her first months, she remarks that she learned a great deal, especially about the life of poverty. Instead of pursuing things that were nice, she would seek the undesirable. She also would not defend her actions, even when wrongly accused.

Reflecting on this time, Thérèse declared that she was not in need of a "spiritual director," someone to help guide and direct her in pursuit of spiritual maturity. Her famous claim was that Jesus was her only "director." While she may have believed this to be true, in practical experience she had a spiritual director, Father Pichon. Although far away, she wrote to him each month for many years. He did not write to her as often, however, and their relationship was broken by the conflict over Céline and her entrance into the convent. She was shaped by both the Mother Superior and Father Pichon, but she was also formed from earliest childhood for the life of the convent.

An essential part of the Carmelite life was to seek atonement by participating in the Lord's Passion. Thérèse was not greatly committed to physical mortification. The only one she allowed herself was not to allow rest against the back of the chair when seated. Her sole experiment with penance of this type was wearing a cross with sharp points, which did not last long. More importantly, Thérèse was looking for a shortcut, which will be discussed later. One thing that may have moved Thérèse in the direction of mortification was her embarrassment or even fear of her own body, which is well supported by her writing and also part of the culture of the day. "Without any education about her sexuality, Thérèse in her menstruations was exposed to what Simone de Beauvoir called the horror of feeling dirty...her period coming like a shameful disease."<sup>97</sup> This sort of Gnostic tendency made Thérèse uncomfortable with herself. Another besetting problem was falling asleep during her times of meditation.

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<sup>97</sup> Nevin, 278.



On September 2 she was required to submit to the canonical examination. “Pourquoi êtes-vous venue au carmel ?—Je suis venue pour sauver les âmes et surtout afin de prier pour les prêtres.”<sup>98</sup> This is the same statement she had made so many times. Her wedding day finally arrived on September 8, 1890, the day of her holy vows, her union with Christ.

September 24 was the day of “taking the veil.” For Thérèse, it was filled with sadness because she was alone. Her father was in the hospital<sup>99</sup> and her spiritual father was in Canada. In reality, she was not alone, her two sisters were there. The taking of the veil represented the kind of penance Thérèse desired to live—a hidden life, inconspicuous, not attracting attention. Her well-known smile was able to mask the turmoil and pain she felt within.

She was greatly encouraged during a retreat a couple of months before the death of Mother Geneviève, when she entered into the confession:

Il me lança à pleine voile sur les flots de la confiance et de l’amour qui m’attiraient si fort mais sur lesquels je n’osais avancer... Il me dit que mes fautes ne faisaient pas de peine au Bon Dieu, que tenant sa place il me disait de sa part qu’Il était très content de moi... Je sentais bien au fond de mon cœur que c’était vrai car le Bon Dieu est plus tendre qu’une Mère...<sup>100</sup>

The moment with this priest was pivotal in forming Thérèse’s view of God as loving and kind. Up until this time in her life, she had seen God as judgemental and critical. With the priest’s words, however, she began to see that God was not waiting to punish His children. She had never before heard such words: that it was possible one’s faults did not cause pain to the Lord. It gave her great joy and relief from a burden of guilt and fear.

During her retreat in 1892, Thérèse became aware of the importance of welcoming Jesus into one’s life: “Ce qu’elle voit dans sa retraite, c’est d’une part que Jésus veut être accueilli : ‘Ce que Jésus désire, c’est que nous Le recevions dans nos cœurs.’”<sup>101</sup> This sentiment would be equally shared by most Protestants.

In early February of 1893, Pauline was elected as Mother Superior, replacing Mother Marie de Gonzague. Thus she was now Thérèse’s mother for the second time. The importance of this event must be seen in the light of Thérèse’s earlier psychological struggles. She credits her older sister Pauline with helping her to understand the value of suffering. Just weeks after her entrance, she wrote to Pauline, Agnès de Jésus, on the value of suffering.

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<sup>98</sup> Guy Gaucher, *Histoire d’Une Vie: Thérèse Martin*, 118.

<sup>99</sup> On February 12, Monsieur Martin was felled by a devastating illness. His hallucinations were so frightening that he grabbed his pistol, and the doctors were forced to place him in an asylum.

<sup>100</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*, 1998, 147-148.

Oh ! non, je ne craindrai pas ses coups, car, même dans les souffrances les plus amères, on sent toujours que c'est sa douce main qui frappe... Pour une souffrance supportée avec joie, quand je pense que pendant toute l'éternité on aimera mieux le Bon Dieu ! Puis, en souffrant, on peut sauver les âmes.<sup>102</sup>

In Thérèse's way of thinking, it was God who brought suffering and that by enduring it with joy, souls were saved.

One day Thérèse heard that Céline, still not part of the convent, planned to attend a social event and might dance. Thérèse recounts this event in her autobiography and emphasises the importance of dedicating oneself completely to God, demonstrating Thérèse's view that only through the convent could one be sure of one's salvation. Thérèse dared not risk that one of her closest sisters would not follow in this sure path of holiness.

The Bible became increasingly important to her at Carmel. It seems astonishing that Thérèse would not have had a New Testament until she entered Carmel. What had she read up until this point? One must remember, however, that she was a product of her times. The typical Catholic home in France was not a place where family members were encouraged to read the scriptures privately; they heard selected verses only during mass and other religious events. In Thérèse's letters, one can see a great deal of meditation on the Word of God, as one verse leads naturally to another; thus her first hand understanding of scripture began at Carmel.

As a result of her assigned tasks, sweeping and washing, Thérèse developed a persistent cough and, sometimes, pain in her chest. She had recurring throat infections. Eventually, the doctor was called to treat growths in her throat, a symptom of the illness to come, but apparently no one realised. Around this same time, Monsieur Martin passed away on July 29, 1894.

With the death of her father, Céline was free to pursue her dream of entering the convent. Father Pichon had invited her to work with him in Canada, but Thérèse strongly opposed this idea. She was so upset that she wrote a letter to Father Pichon, who acquiesced to her wishes. Monsieur Delatroëtte believed that having four sisters in the same convent would not be appropriate and a nun in the convent formally opposed the addition of yet another Martin girl. But for Thérèse, there was no compromising: Céline must join her.

At this same time, in a "conversation with Jesus," Thérèse made a pact of sorts: If Céline was admitted into the convent, which was strictly against the rules, then Thérèse would take that as a sign that

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<sup>101</sup> Thérèse, cited by Jean-François Six. *La Véritable Enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux*, 147.

<sup>102</sup> M.-D. Poinset. *Thérèse de Lisieux*. 240.



her father did not go to purgatory but went directly to heaven. This illustrates her fear of purgatory even at this late date. Moreover, it was a clever manipulation of God, if that were possible, to get her sister into the convent. Céline was admitted on September 14, 1894, and became one of the new novices under the care of a very content Thérèse!

During this period, Thérèse discovered the “Way of Love.” In fact, there were three things which held great value: suffering, abandonment and love. Here one can point to the influence of St. John of the Cross:

Je puis dire ces paroles du cantique spirituel de N. Père S<sup>t</sup> Jean de la Croix : « Depuis que j’en ai l’expérience, l’AMOUR est si puissant en œuvres qu’il sait tirer profit de tout, du bien et du mal qu’il trouve en moi, et transformer mon âme en soi. »<sup>103</sup> O ma Mère Chérie ! qu’elle est douce la voie de l’amour. Sans doute, on peut bien tomber, on peut commettre des infidélités, mais, l’amour sachant tirer profit de tout, a bien vite consumé tout ce qui peut déplaire à Jésus, ne laissant qu’une humble et profonde paix au fond du cœur...<sup>104</sup>

Thérèse believed that she could do almost anything and love would eradicate that which was not pleasing to Jesus.

Thérèse was confident of the ongoing presence, constant guidance and inspiration of God in her life: “...(J)e sens qu’Il est en moi, à chaque instant, Il me guide, m’inspire ce que je dois dire ou faire.”<sup>105</sup> With this in mind, she would put her confidence in the mercy and justice of God.

## **B. MANUSCRIPT B<sup>106</sup>** **(Letter to sœur Marie du Sacre Cœur - 1896)**

Thérèse’s oldest sister Marie asked that she produce a work to describe her “little way.” In the first few pages, Thérèse wrote an introduction to her sister, full of disclaimers and humility. She then summarized her theological and practical ideas on living a holy life: “...(T)out ce que Jésus réclame de nous, il n’a point besoin de nos œuvres, mas seulement de notre amour...”<sup>107</sup>

This section really begins with the vision (actually a dream) of three Carmelites. From this dream, Thérèse learned that the saints in heaven were watching over her and were very satisfied. It appears that in Thérèse’s mind this vision was a confirmation that her little doctrine was pleasing to God.

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<sup>103</sup> Saint Jean de la Croix, *Poésies : Glose sur le divin*. Cited by Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*, 1998, 151.

<sup>104</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*, 1998, 151-152.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>106</sup> Up to this point, all of the quotations in this work taken from *Histoire d’une Ame* have come from the manuscript written to Thérèse’s sister Pauline, also known as Révérende Mère Agnès de Jésus. This first document is commonly referred to as Manuscript A. At this point, the focus shifts to the work written to her other sister Marie, also known as Sœur Marie du Sacré Cœur. This entire second work is a part of the popular autobiography known as *Histoire d’une Ame*, but is much shorter. It is popularly referred to as Manuscript B.

In her autobiography, Thérèse states her calling as threefold: Spouse of Jesus, Carmelite and Mother of Souls. In addition, she deeply desired to experience other callings: warrior, priest, apostle, doctor, martyr, to name but a few. This is reminiscent of her childhood statement that she desired “all.” In desperation, she opened her Bible; by chance it opened to First Corinthians, Chapter 13, the exact text she needed. Through love she could accomplish all of the other gifts, callings and apostolic ministries. Along with this calling was the idea that not only could she love, but that in some way she could also be a sacrifice of love.

In June of 1895, Thérèse was inspired to offer herself as a sacrifice of merciful love. Others had offered themselves as victims to God’s Justice so that they could take upon themselves the punishment that was not their due. The purpose of Thérèse’s sacrifice, however, was to compensate for those who had rejected God’s love. At this same time, Thérèse had a mystical experience of love, of being plunged completely into a fire, which she took as a sign that her sacrifice had been accepted by God.

This offering of love changed her understanding of purgatory. As God’s love consumed her, all traces of sin were erased. This, then, removed any fear of purgatory. She concluded that the fires of love were more sanctifying than the fires of purgatory. Thérèse decided that love was sufficiently powerful to cover unintentional sin.

It is important to note that this new doctrine of love challenged the long-established doctrine of purgatory in the Catholic Church. Thérèse did not reject the fires of purgatory, however, which would have been considered heresy at the time. She only said that the fires of love were more purifying. It is no wonder that her views were popular: she had found a way to avoid purgatory. Many quote this as her rejection of the doctrine of purgatory, but her statements later in life indicate her certain bondage to this doctrine.

Thérèse was now inspired to write as much as possible. She had only two free hours a day, and often they were taken up with other responsibilities. She completed a *théâtre* for Christmas and, following that, the second part of Joan of Arc, where she played the part of the martyr and was almost burned as the wood was accidentally lit. She was obviously placing herself in the role of Joan: Soon after, she wrote a dozen poems and four more plays. Thérèse had become the poet of the community.

Her final statement in this manuscript is one of amazement that God had chosen her to share all of His secrets of love. Prior to Vatican II, her message of love was truly innovative and should not be

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<sup>107</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*, 1998, (Manuscript B), 162.



ignored. Having taken place more than 60 years before this Council makes it even more astounding – especially in a world of Jansenistic legalism.

### **C. MANUSCRIPT C<sup>108</sup>** **(Letter to Mother Marie de Gonzague - 1896-1897)**

Prior to the writing of Manuscript C, on April 3, 1896, Thérèse discovered that she had a serious illness. Her joy quickly disappeared and as suffering took its place. Questions arose in her mind; thoughts that all of her life of commitment to God was only an illusion tormented her. This “dark night” lasted until her death, only eighteen months later. Outwardly, she maintained a façade of happiness and peace. The evidence suggests, however, that inwardly she struggled with the issues of science and humanism as they related to matters of faith:

C'est le raisonnement des pires matérialistes qui s'impose à mon esprit :...en faisant sans cesse des progrès nouveaux, la science expliquera tout naturellement, on aura la raison absolue de tout ce qui existe et qui reste encore un problème, parce qu'il reste beaucoup de chose à découvrir.<sup>109</sup>

Many intellectuals at this time were expressing their views from a secular, scientific perspective.

Thérèse's statements, however, claimed that evil forces were bringing the torment into her life. Her key question was the doubt of heaven, but it seems to have been deeper and more complex than just that one issue.

Thérèse begins Manuscript C with appreciation for the training in humility that she received at the hand of the Mother Superior, Mère Marie de Gonzague: “Jésus savait bien qu'il fallait à sa petite fleur l'eau vivifiante de l'humiliation...”<sup>110</sup>

Thérèse then describes to Mother Marie de Gonzague her “little way,” beginning with Thérèse's feelings of inadequacy when comparing herself to the great saints of history. This inadequacy motivated her to look for a shortcut to sanctity, an “elevator.” During her pilgrimage to Rome, she had ridden on an elevator for the first time, going from the ground floor to the top floor in only a few moments. As she reflected on this, she wondered if there was not also a similar means to achieve holiness. The shortcut she discovered, the way to be lifted up to heaven, was the arms of Jesus. In order to be lifted up as a child, the goal was to remain small or perhaps to become smaller. In the book of Isaiah, Thérèse found more support

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<sup>108</sup> This next section will focus on the writings commonly known as Manuscript C. Thérèse was asked by the Mother Superior to write a summary of her “little way.” This manuscript was written during the last year of her life.

<sup>109</sup> Guy Gaucher. *Histoire d'Une Vie: Thérèse Martin*, 172.

<sup>110</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d'une Ame*, 1998, (Manuscript C), 178.

for her “little way”: “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.”<sup>111</sup> Here was the “elevator” for which she had been searching.

Thérèse was also committed to obey the rule of the convent, and because she lived in this arena of complete obedience she could require the same of her novices. Thérèse described a simple kind of sanctity that results from obedience. To obey those in a superior role would guarantee that the one in submission was on the path to heaven. Accepting this statement, in my opinion, could quickly lead to error. Furthermore, this obedience must be seen as only one of Thérèse’s key elements of holiness, along with suffering, abandonment and love.

Thérèse denies that she intended to come to Carmel for the purpose of being with her sisters, insisting that being with her family could present many problems when one has made a decision to deny the natural inclinations of life:

Ce n’est point pour vivre avec mes sœurs que je suis venue au Carmel, c’est uniquement pour répondre à l’appel de Jésus ; ah ! je pressentais bien que ce devait être un sujet de souffrance continuelle de vivre avec ses sœurs, lorsqu’on ne veut rien accorder à la nature.<sup>112</sup>

In view of the effort she went to in order to have her sister Céline admitted into the Carmel, however, this hardly seems a candid reflection of her true inner motives.

Speaking to his disciples, the Lord encouraged them to love one another. This passage greatly influenced Thérèse in her own pursuit of “love”:

Il leur dit avec une inexprimable tendresse : Je vous fais un commandement nouveau, c’est de vous entr’aimer, et que *comme je vous ai aimés, vous vous aimiez les uns les autres*. La marque à quoi tout le monde connaîtra que vous êtes mes disciples, c’est si vous vous entr’aimez.<sup>113</sup>

Through this and other passages, it is clear that Thérèse’s grasp of the attributes of love, up to this point, were flawed. Her own words indicate that for most of her life her practice of love had been directed only to God. The love of neighbour had been an act of obedience, but nothing more. Now she realised that her love of neighbour was greatly deficient, and resolved to spend time with those considered the most unpleasant in the convent. This also indicates to me that she did not truly understand brotherly (or sisterly) love. Can one only demonstrate love by being with the most unpleasant of the group?

She also discovered the difference between giving and releasing something that was requested, the latter being much more difficult. Certainly, it is difficult to loan something and not expect something in return, particularly when the thing borrowed is *time*. Time was really the most valuable commodity that

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<sup>111</sup> Isaiah 66:13, NIV.

<sup>112</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*, 1998, (Manuscript C), 186.

<sup>113</sup> John 13.34-35. Cited by Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*, 1998, (Manuscript C), 190.



the Carmelites had at their discretion. Not only was time valuable, but one's thoughts could also be considered property. The idea here was that a nugget of spiritual wisdom could be shared as though personally invented, when, in actuality, it had been heard from someone else. So Thérèse became jealous of her teaching ideas that were passed off as being originally from someone else.

Thérèse described the importance of prayer, especially for the saving of souls. Her problem was that she did not find value in most of the prayer books. Her prayers were more like the comments of a small child, expressing her true desires to God. This made her mystical relationship very attractive to those living one hundred years later, as her simple, conversational prayers were a method of sanctity, the mode of prayer for most evangelical Christians.

As darkness enveloped her life, her intimate communion with God became distant, even nonexistent. For Thérèse, the only means to advance was to continue to confess her love and faithfulness to Him, despite the shadows around her. Görres views Thérèse as a female version of John of the Cross. She claimed to have read nothing but his writings between the ages of 16 and 18: "According to him, it is one of the features of the 'dark night', that inexpressibly mysterious and painful process of purification that must be undergone on the way to the summit of union with God..."<sup>114</sup> John of the Cross was a key influence, but not the only one. Thérèse never rejected the foundation of her holiness, *The Imitation*.

Thérèse was also known to evidence spiritual gifts. Once, Thérèse was speaking with a sister who appeared to be very happy and content. Suddenly, Thérèse with a word unmasked her charade. This would be considered by Charismatics as a "word of knowledge," mentioned as a spiritual gift in 1 Corinthians 12:8.

During her upbringing, good works were tremendously important. Motivation for counting acts of charity was the reward that would be received in heaven. Some claimed that there was a change in her heart from this almost mathematical system of rewards that she learned as a child to one of relationship and love. She rejected the Jansenistic system that was pressed upon her as a child and moved away from this counting of good works. In my opinion, Ida Friederike Görres exaggerates Thérèse's rejection of this system.<sup>115</sup> One can find significant evidence that she still laboured beneath it, as it was her only worldview.

Thérèse recounts what she considered a genuine act of love in caring for one of the invalid sisters. She volunteered to conduct a wheelchair-bound sister to the canteen: "Cela me coûtait beaucoup

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<sup>114</sup> Ida Friederike Görres. *The Hidden Face*, 251.

de me propose pour rendre ce petit service, car je savais que ce n'était pas facile de contenter cette pauvres S<sup>r</sup> S<sup>t</sup> Pierre qui souffrait tant qu'elle n'aimait pas à changer de conductrice. Cependant je ne voulais pas manquer une si belle occasion d'exercer la charité..."<sup>116</sup> Here, she complained that it would "cost her so much" to transport this woman from one location to another. But how much could that have inconvenienced her? A story such as this makes it appear that the attitude of her heart was still lacking. In addition, her final comment about the "exercise of charity" implies that even if she was not counting, she was keeping track on some level.

Perhaps Thérèse was not interested in merits for herself, but she worked with the greatest of diligence for the accumulation of merits for others. Even the merits that she could earn according to Roman Catholic doctrine were offered in poverty to others. This effort for merits came from her view of God as vindictive. According to Jean-François Six, the focus on merits was a part of the culture: "Or la spiritualité qui imprégnait essentiellement cette époque venait d'une conception selon laquelle Jésus venait sauver l'homme maudit par son Père...La consécration religieuse venait coopérer à ce travail d'apaisement de la colère de Dieu par Jésus."<sup>117</sup> In my opinion, Thérèse was not able to escape this view of a harsh God and a loving Jesus. The counting of merits supports this, as well as her ongoing comments about purgatory. Thérèse could not completely free herself from the action of the accumulation of merits. For example, she justified her ongoing counting of righteous acts as helping others who were suffering in the fires of purgatory or who had not yet been redeemed. In contrast to others of her day, she did modify the emphasis on merit by her focus on love, which would make her relevant in the future.

Thérèse's closing comments in Manuscript C concern Mary and Martha. She likened herself to Mary, burning with love for the Master and sitting at His feet:

Ce n'est pas à la première place mais à la dernière que je m'élance, au lieu de m'avancer avec le pharisien, je répète, remplie de confiance, l'humble prière du publicain, mais surtout j'imité la conduite de Madeleine, son étonnante ou plutôt son amoureuse audace qui charme le Cœur de Jésus, séduit le mien.<sup>118</sup>

#### D. FINAL MONTHS

In November of 1896, Thérèse was contemplating going to Tonkin<sup>119</sup> as a missionary, unaware of the gravity of her illness. She began a novena in order to discover God's will in this matter. During her time of prayer, her condition worsened. In these final days, there were two subjects that constantly came

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<sup>115</sup> Ida Friederike Görres. *The Hidden Face*, 274-275.

<sup>116</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d'une Ame*, 1998, (Manuscript C), 213.

<sup>117</sup> Jean-François Six. *La Véritable Enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux*, 121.

<sup>118</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d'une Ame*, 1998, (Manuscript C), 223.



to her mind. The first was the “shower of roses” or the many blessings she would send from heaven. The second was her mission to teach others the “little way.” Bearing in mind the darkness she was experiencing, it is ironic that in one breath she pondered her annihilation and in the next considered all of the good she would do from heaven. This conflict gives reason for much discussion concerning the final months of her life.

On March 3, Thérèse began a novena focusing on the goal of the work after her death. In her last months of life, she made many statements about the work she would do in heaven. As her death neared, there seemed to be an understanding between Thérèse and her sisters that she would be a saint and that everything she touched would be of value—a relic.

As Thérèse’s life was coming to an end, the theme of suffering can be seen very strongly in her writing. It was something she had followed from her earliest childhood, this idea that one gains merit by what one suffers. She was proud of her suffering, stating that “les anges ne peuvent pas souffrir, ils ne sont pas aussi heureux que moi.”<sup>120</sup> The next day, she said: “Je sens bien que le bon Dieu veut que je souffre. Les remèdes qui devraient me faire du bien et qui soulagent les autres malades, me font du mal à moi.”<sup>121</sup> “Oh ! comme je me plains ! pourtant je ne voudrais pas moins souffrir.”<sup>122</sup>

As her strength faded, Pauline, Mère Agnes, took a special interest in her, spending more and more time at her side. With a notebook always ready, Pauline would write down most of what her sister uttered. Thérèse eventually lost her appetite and wasted away. In May, she was relieved of all of her normal responsibilities at the convent.

On June 2, Pauline went to speak with Mère Marie de Gonzague. The goal of this conversation was to hand over the manuscript that Thérèse had written for her sister. This manuscript would serve as her death notice. Mère Agnes also encouraged the current Mother Superior to request that Thérèse continue to write. Thus Thérèse began to write on June 3 or 4 what is known as Manuscript C.<sup>123</sup> About this same time, Thérèse was resting during recreation one day. She took the opportunity to say goodbye to her sisters, almost four months before her death. They all listened attentively. At the end of June, she met with the other family members in the parlour. It would be their last meeting. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July, Thérèse was moved to the infirmary, as her suffering continued to advance: fever, starvation, suffocation,

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<sup>119</sup> Today, Tonkin is the most northern region of Vietnam.

<sup>120</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux (St. Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face). *Derniers Entretiens Avec Ses Sœurs*. (Paris: Les Editions Desclée De Brouwer et les Editions du Cerf, 1971), 322. (August 16, 1897)

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 322-323. (August 17, 1897)

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 341. (August 25, 1897)

gangrene in the intestines, not to mention her emotional pain. From May until September, Thérèse failed with each passing day.

It was during July that Thérèse and Pauline discussed the future of Thérèse's manuscript. If it was used for her death notice, there could be many problems in its publication. Pauline was given complete freedom to edit the document. During these months of private conversation with her sister, Thérèse revealed her plans following her death. Her boldness was without limit: "Il faudra que le bon Dieu fasse toutes mes volontés au Ciel, parce que je n'ai jamais fait ma volonté sur la terre."<sup>124</sup> This statement may make sense from a human perspective, but it implies a manipulation of God that is disturbing from a theological viewpoint.

The last respite for Thérèse came from August 27 to September 13. Many of her comments were recorded during these days of remission. However, a new torment began to invade her soul at the end of August, as she spoke of feeling demons in her room. During her last weeks, she became obsessed with the Virgin Mary: "Je voudrais être sûre qu'elle m'aime, la Sainte Vierge."<sup>125</sup> While her love went towards God, her prayers went to the Virgin: "Priez bien la Sainte Vierge pour moi..."<sup>126</sup> "Ma bonne Sainte Vierge..."<sup>127</sup> And on the day she died: "O mon Dieu !... Je l'aime le bon Dieu ! O ma bonne Sainte Vierge, venez à mon secours !" <sup>128</sup>

On September 30, Thérèse was slowly suffocating throughout the long day. At five o'clock in the evening, the community was summoned to pray in the infirmary and gathered around her bed: After some time had passed, the Mother Superior released the sisters. Later they were again summoned: "Les sœurs agenouillées virent son visage redevenir très paisible, son regard brillant se fixer un peu au-dessus de la Vierge du sourire, 'l'espace d'un Credo.' Puis elle s'affaissa, les yeux fermés. Elle souriait. Elle était très belle et avait l'apparence d'une très jeune fille. Il était 19h20 environ."<sup>129</sup> The next day, Thérèse's body was placed for viewing behind the grill. The burial followed on October 4, with many of her extended family in attendance.

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<sup>123</sup> Guy Gaucher. *Histoire d'Une Vie: Thérèse Martin*, 199.

<sup>124</sup> Thérèse Martin, cited by Guy Gaucher. *Histoire d'Une Vie: Thérèse Martin*, 211.

<sup>125</sup> Thérèse. *Derniers Entretiens Avec Ses Sœurs*, 1971, 332. (August 22, 1897)

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 337. (August 23, 1897)

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 347. (August 28, 1897)

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 381. (September 30, 1897)

<sup>129</sup> Guy Gaucher. *Histoire d'Une Vie: Thérèse Martin*, 219.



## E. THE “SHOWER OF ROSES”

Pauline took it upon herself to see that Thérèse indeed became a saint. Exactly one year following her death, *The Story of a Soul* went to the presses. Two-thousand volumes were printed at a cost of 4 francs each. There is no question that Thérèse gave Pauline the authority to make changes to her writings. The real questions are, does *The Story of a Soul* agree with the original manuscripts so that one could read them interchangeably, with confidence? Does *The Story of a Soul* truly reflect the original manuscripts? During the process of canonisation, a decision was made to place a copy of the original manuscripts within the documents of the process.

On May 24, 1899, the new Monsignor approved a second printing of 6,000 copies. It was then translated into English in 1901, into Polish in 1902, into Dutch in 1904, and into German, Portuguese, Spanish, Japanese, and Russian in 1905. Miracles, visions, and healings continued and multiplied around the world. All were accredited to this little saint. By 1907, there were clear indications from Pope Pius X that he wanted her beatified, calling her “la plus grande sainte des temps modernes.”<sup>130</sup>

Relics gained importance within a few years of Thérèse’s death. By the time of her canonisation, over thirty-million pictures had been sent out, as well as more than seventeen million relics. By 1918, the Carmel in Lisieux was receiving 1,800 letters a day requesting prayers, pictures, or relics.<sup>131</sup>

Only 13 years after her death, the ordinary process of beatification began, on August 3, 1910. The First World War slowed the process down somewhat, but by 1915 they had already printed over 200,000 copies of *The Story of a Soul*, over 700,000 copies of her abbreviated life story and over 100,000 copies of *Shower of Roses*. By 1918, the Carmel had collected 592 pages of testimonies. On April 23, 1923, Thérèse was beatified at Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome and on May 17, 1925, she was canonised. Over 1,700 churches in the world are named after Thérèse of Lisieux.

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<sup>130</sup> Guy Gaucher. *Histoire d’Une Vie: Thérèse Martin*, 225.

<sup>131</sup> Sheridan Gilley, *Holiness in the Roman Catholic Tradition*. In *Holiness: Past & Present*, edited by Stephen C. Barton, 317. London: T & T Clark Ltd, 2003.

## SECTION 2 – THÉRÈSIAN HOLINESS

### INTRODUCTION

In this section, we will examine the primary elements of holiness in the life of Thérèse of Lisieux. First, it will be necessary to examine the influences in her life, which will be divided into two stages: Before Carmel and During Carmel. These divisions will be further subdivided into multiple levels of influence. Then, we will examine the opinions of those who first wrote about her life, available through the Trials for her beatification, as well as books published by close associates. Finally, we will examine three authors' writings about Thérèse in the years between her beatification and Vatican II: Stéphane-Joseph Piat, Gabriel Martin, and Hyacinthe Petitot.

#### A. INFLUENCES ON HOLINESS

##### 1. Before Carmel

Thérèse partitioned her life into three sections according to the struggles she faced. However, in terms of holiness, one finds two major stages: her life prior to entering Carmel and her years at Carmel. The years preceding her arrival at Carmel include two basic areas of influence as concerns piety, the first being the cultural setting of France at the end of the nineteenth century, explained in chapter two. The second area of influence before Carmel came from the views of her family. Like most children brought up in a strong family setting, she absorbed the views of her parents and, in this particular case, of her older sisters. Special attention will also be given to the influence of *The Imitation of Christ*, generally accepted to have been written by Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471).

##### 2. During Carmel

Three primary influences are evident during Thérèse's time at Carmel: the institution itself, obviously for its traditions, as well as its written organisational documents; and the Rule and the Constitution, most of which was shaped by the founder of the Carmelite reform Teresa<sup>132</sup> of Avila. Following Teresa of Avila's influence was that of John of the Cross, one of Teresa's students and a prolific writer frequently quoted by Thérèse. The third influence was scripture, cited more than any other source.

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<sup>132</sup> In her own written works, Thérèse of Lisieux refers to Teresa of Avila with the same spelling as her own, but for this work, in order to avoid confusion, Thérèse of Avila (Sixteenth Century Spain) will be referred to as Teresa of Avila.



In examining these primary levels of influence, it will be possible to identify some of the significant ideas of holiness held by Thérèse and to trace them to their origins. It will also put Thérèse's writings more clearly into view, as one begins to interpret them from another perspective.

## **I. BEFORE CARMEL**

It has already been demonstrated that the Martin family clearly aligned itself with a group that I have labelled Monarchist Piety; yet all of the normal avenues for such piety were being dismantled or destroyed. Religious schools were being closed and the Church had lost its "most favoured" status with the government. How could this family continue to show its religious commitment with no king in power and the Republicans gaining more and more influence?

With the king of France no longer a point of connection for loyal Catholics, they turned toward the Pope. This was not a liberal movement, as was suggested by Lamennais in the 1830s, but a minor shift from conservative Monarchist Piety to conservative Ultramontanism. The change is illustrated by the great number of pilgrimages Monsieur Martin enjoyed, and even more so the voyage to Rome taken with his two daughters, Thérèse and Céline. Such a shift in loyalty to Rome and the Pope was inevitable as the return of the king became more and more unlikely in the French political situation. Having previously examined the cultural setting, let us advance to the family influences.

### **A. THE VIEWS OF THE MARTIN FAMILY**

Not surprisingly, the views of the Martin family greatly shaped Thérèse as a young child, as can be illustrated by her parents' daily attendance of early mass. Communication of values was also critical—religious education was to be valued and the cloistered life preferred. After all, both of Thérèse's parents had attempted to join religious orders. As a young child, Thérèse's father would often walk with her to a different church. Clearly, religion and faith were central in the Martin home. With this in mind, what were some of the key values of religious piety communicated to young Thérèse?

#### **First - Faithful Participation in Catholic Tradition**

The religious commitment of Thérèse's parents is noted by all of their children who participated in the Ordinary Process. Pauline, Mother Agnès, described it in these terms:

...Notre mère, malgré les fatigues de sa vie, assistait tous les jours avec notre père à la messe de cinq heures et demie et y faisaient tous les deux la sainte communion quatre ou cinq fois la semaine...Tous les deux faisaient leur carême, jeûne et abstinence, malgré le faible complexion

de ma mère. Mon père tenait à l'observance stricte du dimanche, bien que la fermeture de sa maison de commerce de bijouterie, spécialement ce jour là, lui causât un notable préjudice.<sup>133</sup>

She also portrayed Monsieur Martin as a gentle man, generous and kind to the poor. Céline agrees with this picture of faithfulness. It is also likely that Céline and Pauline said at the Trial what they thought the authorities wanted to hear. Even if some of the values were exaggerated, the picture of the Martin home was one of very loyal Catholic faith and practice.

### **Second - Rejection of the World**

At the Ordinary Process, Marie described in almost isolationist terms her parents as having trained the family to be detached from the world:<sup>134</sup> "...on y évitait l'agitation des relations mondaines et on tendait à rester seuls en famille."<sup>135</sup> This is supported by many statements in Thérèse's autobiography, as well as their personal letters, and was common for those seeking the religious life. Such rejection of the world is also evident in Thérèse's social isolation as a child.

### **Third - Religious Life: The Way to Sainthood**

This point has already been demonstrated in the previous section. Pauline testified to this at the Ordinary Process: "Notre mère désirait que toutes ses filles soient religieuses, sans vouloir cependant nous influencer."<sup>136</sup> It was the only sure path to go to heaven, in their thinking.

### **Fourth - Counting Acts of Virtue**

Part of the pathway to sainthood was the counting of acts of virtue, by which one learned to live a virtuous life. This has already been demonstrated as well. As a young child, Thérèse learned from her mother and sisters a very rigid and mechanical method. One must question if an act of love performed to increase one's tally of individual acts is truly an act of virtue.

### **Fifth - The Need for Suffering**

Pain and suffering were also included on the pathway to becoming a saint, as is illustrated in the loss of Thérèse's mother. Aunt Dosithée also held some rather strong views about the way in which God regards suffering. Thus, the understanding of the need for suffering was foundational in Thérèse's young life.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Bibliotheca Carmelitica, Series 1, textus 3. *Procès de Béatification et Canonisation de Sainte Thérèse de L'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face. I Procès informatif ordinaire.* (Rome: Teresianum, 1973), 135.

<sup>134</sup> Christopher O'Mahony. *St Thérèse of Lisieux, by those who knew her, Testimonies from the process of beatification.* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1975), 85.

<sup>135</sup> *Procès informatif ordinaire*, 264

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 135.

<sup>137</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux (St. Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face). *Œuvres Complètes.* (Paris: Les Editions Desclée De Brouwer et les Editions du Cerf, 2004), 84.



## Sixth - The Fear of Purgatory

The doctrine of suffering leads naturally to the Roman Doctrine of Purgatory. One must strive for sainthood in order to avoid its fires. Along with illustrating the moral manipulation of that day, a story about Marie demonstrates the fear purgatory held in the lives of the Martin family. In this story, Marie was in need of some dental work and was told by her mother that her suffering would be beneficial to her grandfather in purgatory. Thus Marie was made to believe that if she suffered sufficiently, her grandfather's suffering in purgatory could be diminished. We have already seen in Thérèse's life the connection between her desire to be a saint and her hope of avoiding purgatory through the story of Céline joining the convent as a sign that Thérèse's father did not go to purgatory. It is a generally accepted doctrine in the Catholic Church that a saint will not have to endure purgatory, so her motivation to become a saint was also, in some manner, linked to her beliefs concerning it.

## CONCLUSION

In general, it can be said that for Thérèse there was an uncritical acceptance of the doctrines of the Catholic Church of her time. Later in life, she began to question certain rigid cultural ideas such as purgatory and mortification. However, as a child and in her home there was an open concurrence with the Church's doctrines, purgatory, penance, suffering, and esteem for the religious life; all were acknowledged as essential and the only means whereby one could become a saint and therefore holy.

### B. *THE IMITATION*

Along with the unyielding, virtue-counting, fear-filled, suffering sanctity that Thérèse absorbed from her family, there was also a large amount of *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471). Although the authorship of this work has at times been questioned, there is no question about the enormous influence it had in Thérèse's life.

#### 1. Entire work Memorised

In the Ordinary Process, Céline notes that Thérèse knew the work by heart.<sup>138</sup> It is said that Thérèse's aunt would begin a passage of *The Imitation* and then listen with pride as Thérèse would finish it from memory: "...chez ma Tante on s'en amusait beaucoup et l'ouvrant au hasard on me faisait réciter le chapitre qui se trouvait devant les yeux."<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Her memorization of the *Imitation* is well-known. *Procès informatif ordinaire*, 304.

<sup>139</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, 146. Nevin says that this took place when Thérèse was in her teens. He also concludes that she used Lamennais' translation of *The Imitation*. Nevin, 45.

All of the evidence would in fact suggest that she had almost the entire work committed to memory. Thérèse's own acknowledgment is that she had almost all of it memorised by heart: "Je savais par cœur presque tous les chapitres de ma chère Imitation, ce petit livre ne me quittait jamais ; en été, je le portais dans ma poche, en hiver, dans mon manchon."<sup>140</sup> In terms of Thérèse's holiness, it is my view that all of her early decisions and theology were a reflection of *The Imitation*.

## **2. Filtered Influence from Scripture as a Child**

Part of this same passage refers to the fact that Thérèse was not familiar with the Gospels. One must remember that she did not even own a New Testament until she was at the convent, thus her only exposure to scripture would have been primarily the selected readings during mass. In reference to *The Imitation*, she writes: "C'était le seul livre qui me fit du bien, car je n'avais pas encore trouvé les trésors caches dans l'évangile." From this, it appears quite likely that scripture, as a whole, did not play a pivotal role until after she entered Carmel. This suggests *The Imitation* had even greater meaning for her. One could say that during her childhood years, *The Imitation* was her Bible, perhaps even up until she entered the religious order.

## **3. Examples of Early Play**

Thérèse took the examples and instruction in *The Imitation* and endeavoured to live them out. When Thérèse did play, it was atypical. For example, she would engage in recreation with her cousin, acting out the part of a hermit, or she would play with her sister, practising acts of virtue. Although some of this can be explained as the influences of her family, it is possible that her imagination was also influenced by what she read and memorised. It is my view that Thérèse's entire framework of right and wrong, good and evil, was shaped by *The Imitation*. Obviously, this took place with the smiling approval and encouragement of her family.

## **4. Examples in Her Writings**

In all of her writings, *The Imitation* is directly referred to 48 times either by name, by quotation, or by a similar idea. There are another 53 times when her work references *The Imitation* in the notes of the *Œuvres Complètes*.

## **5. Count for Nothing – Be Ignored**

Some of Thérèse's key ideas about piety and a holy life can be traced directly back to *The Imitation*. One such concept repeated over and over in her writings is the need to "hate one's self" or to

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<sup>140</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, 146.



love being ignored. She writes that one needs to “vouloir être ignoré et compté pour rien - à mettre sa joie dans le mépris de soi-même.”<sup>141</sup> In a letter to her sister Pauline, the idea is the same, though not a direct quotation.<sup>142</sup> In letter 145<sup>143</sup> to her sister Céline, Thérèse basically suggests the same thought, referencing *The Imitation* by name: “Aimez à être ignoré et compté pour rien.”<sup>144</sup> Also in the same letter, she repeats the identical theme three times, quoting *The Imitation* directly every time.<sup>145</sup> One last quotation in the same paragraph, taken directly from *The Imitation* emphasises again, “...ne mettez votre joie que dans le mépris de vous-même.”<sup>146</sup> The identical suggestion recurs in letter 176 and in poem 20 of the *Œuvres Complètes*, and a similar concept can be found in letter 197, which encourages one to be “poor in spirit.”

In comparing some of the quotations to the original work, I found that Thérèse’s ideas closely proximate the teachings in *The Imitation*. In the passage referenced in the previous paragraph, one reads in a modern translation of *The Imitation*, “Aime à être méconnu et compté pour rien.”<sup>147</sup> Although the translation of that phrase might have a slightly different meaning, the next paragraph is translated with the same idea as that of Thérèse: “Voici la leçon la plus haute et la plus utile : la vraie connaissance et le mépris de soi.”<sup>148</sup> The diminishing of self is a common theme in this passage of *The Imitation*.

It is feasible that the seeds for Thérèse’s “little way,” the way of a child, are found in the writings of *The Imitation*, where Thomas à Kempis urges one to become nothing, to hate self, to desire to be ignored. Thérèse took what is stated in primarily negative terms and turned it into something positive: from being nothing to being a child.

## 6. Sweet Suffering

Suffering was a vital part of Thérèse’s life and doctrine. In letter 221, love of suffering is connected to the love of Jesus, in a direct quotation from *The Imitation*: “Quand vous trouverez la souffrance douce et que vous l’aimerez pour l’amour de Jésus-Christ, vous aurez trouvé le Paradis sur

<sup>141</sup> Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, I, 2, 3; III, 49, 7. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, (Manuscript A), 189.

<sup>142</sup> *Imitation*, I, 2, 3. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, (Letter 95), 397.

<sup>143</sup> The numbering of the letters in this work will follow the *Œuvres Complètes*. This numbering is also the same as that of the *Edition Critique*.

<sup>144</sup> *Imitation*, I, 2, 3. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, (Letter 145), 470. Concerning these quotations on self-hate, one should also examine the chapter in the *Imitation*, III, 49, 7.

<sup>145</sup> *Imitation*, II, 11, 4. Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> *Imitation*, III, 49, 7. Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Thomas à Kempis. *L’imitation de Jésus-Christ*. Guilbert, 24.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

terre.”<sup>149</sup> Real happiness can be found on earth when one is able to experience suffering as something sweet, enjoying it as loving Jesus.<sup>150</sup>

In *The Imitation*, suffering is also linked to taking up one’s cross: “Pourquoi donc as-tu peur de porter la croix...Prends donc ta croix...Tantôt tu seras abandonné de Dieu tantôt mis à l’épreuve par le prochain...”<sup>151</sup> The cross leads to testing, testing leads to suffering: “Dieu veut en effet t’apprendre à souffrir l’épreuve sans recevoir de consolation, afin de te soumettre à lui totalement et de sortir plus humble de l’épreuve.”<sup>152</sup> Persecution is also to be endured: “Il ne doit point s’étonner de cette persécution, ni se défendre avec inquiétude; il doit attendre que Dieu le défende, souffrant tout avec humilité, et se considérant comme le dernier de tous les hommes.”<sup>153</sup> The goal of suffering and trials is to bring submission and humility. As long as one attempts to avoid suffering, things will not go well for him.

The following quotation by Thérèse is from *The Imitation*, and while not a request to suffer, it is not so far from it, requesting that all relief be changed into bitterness: “O Jésus ! douceur ineffable, changez pour moi en amertume, toutes les consolations de la terre !...”<sup>154</sup> A similar quotation is found on page 130 of the *Œuvres Complètes*.

Reflecting on the brevity of life, Thérèse encourages Céline in letter 87, “Souffrons en paix.”<sup>155</sup> There is an unmistakable connection between Thérèse’s desire for suffering and *The Imitation*, which summarizes the need to suffer in the cross of Christ: “Toute la vie du Christ fut croix et martyre: et toi, tu cherches repos et joie?”<sup>156</sup>

## 7. Love of Jesus

Although not a major theme in the quotations of *The Imitation*, one finds a statement concerning the importance of love. Since love is one of the paramount concepts in Thérèse’s writings, it is essential to identify the source of her inspiration, found in Manuscript A, which provides a direct quotation from *The Imitation*: “...qu’il faut aimer Jésus par-dessus toutes choses.”<sup>157</sup> Love of Jesus must be first and foremost,

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<sup>149</sup> *Imitation*, II, 12, 11. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 578.

<sup>150</sup> My approximate translation.

<sup>151</sup> *Imitation*, Guilbert, 96-97.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 98.

<sup>153</sup> Thomas à Kempis. *De L’Imitation de Jésus-Christ*. Translated by l’Abbé de Bellegarde, Avec Approbation & Privilege du Roy. (Bruxelles: Freres T’Serestevens, Near 1690), 14.

<sup>154</sup> *Imitation*, III,26,3. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 126.

<sup>155</sup> *Imitation*, III,47, réfl. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 386.

<sup>156</sup> *Imitation*, Guilbert, 98.

<sup>157</sup> *Imitation*, II,7. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 152.



a direct quote from a section heading in *The Imitation*, II, 7, title, which outlines the importance of loving Jesus.<sup>158</sup>

### 8. Love makes the difficult possible

This idea is repeated many times in Thérèse's writings, thus lending more credence to the idea that her emphasis on love is derived from *The Imitation*: "Jamais l'Amour ne trouve d'impossibilités, parce qu'il se croit tout possible et tout permis."<sup>159</sup> The previous quotation is found on page 53v° of the original manuscripts and is repeated in almost identical form on page 75v°. <sup>160</sup> It is not a mistake that Thérèse quotes this passage; it is quoted again a few pages later. Loosely translated, she writes: "Love means nothing is impossible." She quotes the same passage in letter 65: "L'amour peut tout faire, les choses les plus impossibles ne lui semblent pas difficiles."<sup>161</sup> The same idea is also in letter 251: "...rien ne semble impossible à l'âme qui aime."<sup>162</sup>

This idea of God's love removing the impossible is elaborated in *The Imitation*, section III, 5. The quotation in the modern translation is very similar to that of Thérèse: "L'amour oublie le fardeau... Il va au delà du possible, sans tire prétexte d'une impossibilité : tout lui est, pense-t-il, permis et possible."<sup>163</sup> While this is the foundation for the idea found in Thérèse's common quotation, it is not an isolated statement in *The Imitation*; the entire section is on the power of God's love: "L'amour...rend léger tout fardeau et porte avec sérénité les aléas de la vie."<sup>164</sup>

With the knowledge that there are direct quotations in Manuscript A from *The Imitation* concerning this issue of love, it would seem likely that it was the source of Thérèse's emphasis on love, particularly since it provided the foundational lessons during her childhood years.

### 9. Jesus is her Teacher

Great controversy surrounds the idea suggested by Thérèse that she did not need a spiritual director because Jesus taught her directly without words: "Il enseigne sans bruit de paroles."<sup>165</sup> This is actually taken from a section heading in *The Imitation* that describes the mystical practice of listening for the voice of God. The key scriptural idea is from 1 Samuel 3:9-10, where the young prophet hears the voice of God for the first time and thinks it is his master. Finally, he responds with the famous declaration,

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<sup>158</sup> *Imitation*, Guilbert, 85.

<sup>159</sup> *Imitation*, III,5,4. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 158.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid*, 197.

<sup>161</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, 360.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 607.

<sup>163</sup> *Imitation*, Guilbert, 115.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, 114.

“Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.”<sup>166</sup> While not a major concept in *The Imitation*, it is clearly developed and laid the foundation for Thérèse to later define her spiritual insights as coming to her directly from God.

#### 10. Seek No One

It is rather curious that Thérèse did not strive to develop friendships in the convent. In fact, for her it was considered more pious to avoid this. The root of this idea comes from *The Imitation* as well, which encourages one to avoid pursuing a great name: “Ne poursuivez pas cette ombre qu’on appelle un grand nom, ne désirez ni de nombreuses liaisons, ni l’amitié particulière d’aucun homme.”<sup>167</sup> It is not so much that friendships in themselves are negative, but that one should avoid seeking after friendships to build one’s reputation. Do not seek a relationship with anyone in particular; be kind to all equally, without respect of persons and not trying to make a name for yourself.

#### 11. Non-confrontational

Thérèse disciplined herself to not reply to those who were disagreeable. Right or wrong, her decision came from the writings of *The Imitation*, as quoted in Manuscript C: “Il vaut mieux laisser chacun dans son sentiment que de s’arrêter à contester.”<sup>168</sup> The idea that one must not confront another became almost a law with her and, aside from those novices in her charge, a rule throughout her short life. The rationale for this can be found in section III, 44, 1 of *The Imitation*: “Il vaut mieux détourner les yeux des visions déplaisantes et laisser chacun à ses idées, que de s’adonner aux disputes verbales.”<sup>169</sup> The idea here is that it is preferable to avoid strife and conflict than to confront what one considers inappropriate behaviour.

#### 12. Attitude toward Eternity

Thérèse was always thinking about heaven. This emphasis also comes from *The Imitation*, although it may not be a direct quotation: “C’était comme un doux et lointain murmure qui m’annonçait l’arrivée de l’époux.”<sup>170</sup> This thought of heaven was pursuant to learning that she was very ill and might not live long. In letter 173, one sees a strong emphasis on the importance of eternity and the brevity of life: “Qu’importe (dit l’Imitation) un peu de travail sur la terre... nous passons et n’avons point ici de

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<sup>165</sup> This is not a direct quotation, but references the *Imitation*, III, 2, titre. *Œuvres Complètes*, 211.

<sup>166</sup> Authorized King James Version (AV).

<sup>167</sup> *Imitation*, III, 24, 2. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 163.

<sup>168</sup> *Imitation*, III, 44, 1. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 253.

<sup>169</sup> *Imitation*, Guilbert, 186.

<sup>170</sup> *Imitation*, III, 47, réfl. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 240.



demeure permanente !”<sup>171</sup> This is taken from section III, 47, of *The Imitation*, a short discourse on the same theme.<sup>172</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*The Imitation* had lifelong influence in Thérèse’s brief life. Even when writing Manuscript A during her final few years, she placed *The Imitation* on a level of meaning equal to that of scripture. Alluding to how most books on the spiritual life left her dry, she wrote: “Dans cette impuissance l’écriture Sainte et l’*Imitation* viennent à mon secours...”<sup>173</sup> This was obviously written after the Holy Scriptures had taken on greater significance, yet the influence of *The Imitation* lingered.

From these examples, one can see that some of the more significant Thérésian ideas owe their inspiration directly to *The Imitation*. Knowing that this book was important in her life at an early age along with the fact that it was one of her only influences later in life suggest it was foundational to all of her views.

*The Imitation* was also an influential source for two of her most significant ideas. The importance of love is clearly stated: “For love there is no such thing as the impossible.” Her dependence on *The Imitation* is obvious here. Second, the idea of self-diminishment is also central. While Thérèse does not quote *The Imitation* where à Kempis speaks of becoming like a child, she surely was aware of it. In Book III, 58, 9, *The Imitation* quotes Matthew 18.3: “...Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” In addition, *The Imitation* extensively addresses the general attitude of humility and self-abasement. For the purposes of this written work, it is considered the foundational Christian teaching for her life.

## II. DURING CARMEL

### A. TERESA OF AVILA

While a thorough examination of the life of Teresa of Avila not possible herein, it is essential to mention some of the key points in order to explain the foundation of her teaching at Carmel. Teresa entered the convent at Avila in 1535 at the age of 20. It was filled with young women from good families who simply could not find a husband, as most of the men had gone off to seek their fortunes in Asia or Latin America. Twenty-seven years later, in 1562, she left the convent of Avila to form the Saint-Joseph

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<sup>171</sup> *Imitation*, III,47,réfl. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 512. The parenthetical statement is in the original quotation.

<sup>172</sup> *Imitation*, Guilbert, 193.

<sup>173</sup> Manuscript A, *Œuvres Complètes*, 211.

convent. The reason for her departure was to seek a place of greater commitment, one where she could live according to the old Rule of Carmel, in strict observance.

In the following years, Teresa founded a great number of monasteries that would adhere to her ideals of reformation. Key elements of her program included “mental prayer,” solitude, poverty, and humility. She also became allied with the Franciscan movement of the day, Decalced, which simply means “without shoes,” implying a radical poverty. The success of Teresa of Avila raised feminist questions. In order to reduce her influence, some theologians began to reject the idea that women should be involved in “mental prayer.” The Carmel website in France presently states:

Il serait certainement exagéré de voir en Thérèse<sup>174</sup> la première « féministe » des temps modernes, mais il est incontestable qu'elle a joué un rôle non négligeable dans la naissance de ce phénomène à la fois culturel et spirituel. Par son action, par sa pensée mais plus encore par sa vie elle-même, elle a contribué à la prise de conscience de la mission et de la dignité de la femme dans l'Eglise et dans la société.<sup>175</sup>

For a woman in Spain of that day, this was a tremendous achievement.

At the age of 52, Teresa met a young man of only 25 who would become known as John of the Cross, and would become a close friend and integral part of her reform. His writings are widely accepted amongst those seeking spiritual renewal in the Catholic Church.

### 1. The Carmelite Rule

The Rule, which governed one's daily life, was of enormous importance to the life at Carmel, dating from the beginning of the thirteenth century when Brocard was the leader of the Carmes,<sup>176</sup> whose ideal protectors were Mary the mother of Jesus and the Old Testament prophet Elijah. The focus of these monasteries was “being” rather than “doing.” While Steinmann summarises some of the key elements in the ancient Rule; I merely list them here: “Conformité au Christ, Obéissance au prieur, Prière perpétuelle, Stabilité, Solitude, Silence, Travail, Vie Commune et pauvreté, Jeune.”<sup>177</sup> All religious orders required obedience of one's superiors, but at Carmel obedience was taken to an extreme. Poverty was equally severe and work, recreation and prayer times were rigorously monitored. The prayer schedule followed the well-known Divine Office of *prime*, *tierce*, *sexe*, etc. These rules were viewed as the road to holiness. Céline quotes Thérèse as saying: “How fortunate we are...that we have only to put into practice the code

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<sup>174</sup> As previously stated, the name of Teresa of Avila is spelled the same as Thérèse of Lisieux. More accurately, the French translation of her spelling is the same. In this instance, the quotation is referring to Teresa of Avila.

<sup>175</sup> <http://www.carmel.asso.fr/histoire/reformel.shtml> Accessed October 24, 2004.

<sup>176</sup> The male homes of the tradition of Carmel are known as Carme, and the female, Carmelite.

<sup>177</sup> Anne-Elisabeth Steinmann, Carmelite. *La Nuit et la Flamme, Chemins du Carmel*. (Paris: Editions Saint-Paul, 1982), 19-21. Underline mine.



of laws which our holy Founders drew up for us at the cost of so much labour and toil!"<sup>178</sup> Nevin outlines these rules as well and their exacting requirements.<sup>179</sup> This was truly holiness by the rules.

## 2. Thérèse Followed The Rule Precisely

At the time of Thérèse's entrance, the community at Carmel had become admittedly lax under the poor leadership of Mother Marie de Gonzague. Part of joining the community was a willing submission to its regulations. On the day of profession, each was required to state, "It is of my own free will that I desire to be a Carmelite."<sup>180</sup> Thérèse had long practiced the life of a religious person and adapted quickly to her new home. Her observance of The Rule will be discussed more completely in relation to the Trial for her Beatification, but it is clear that she was deeply imprinted and obeyed it with enthusiasm, although not wholly.

## B. THE WRITINGS OF TERESA OF AVILA

If one does not consider the setting of Carmel, Teresa of Avila's writings are of less import than *The Imitation*, both in number of references and in seeming influence. Yet, there are some notable points of reference in the works of Thérèse of Lisieux taken directly from Teresa of Avila, highlighted as follows:

### 1. Save One Soul

The most influential comment by Teresa of Avila is found at least three times in Thérèse's work, a phrase taken from Teresa of Avila's *Way of Perfection* and written by Thérèse as the title of a photo: "I would give a thousand lives to save a single soul."<sup>181</sup> This same statement is in letter 198, with the added comment that such is the apostolic duty of a Carmelite nun.<sup>182</sup> The idea is again expressed in poem 35, 4<sup>th</sup> stanza<sup>183</sup> and established the theological foundation in Thérèse's mind that she could save souls by

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<sup>178</sup> Geneviève of the Holy Face (Céline Martin). *My Sister St. Thérèse*. Authorized Translation by The Carmelite Sisters of New York of Conseils et Souvenirs. Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc. 1997. Original translation and copyright date, 1959, by M. H. Gill and Son, Ltd., Dublin, Ireland, 1959.

<sup>179</sup> Nevin, 138-147.

<sup>180</sup> Geneviève of the Holy Face (Céline Martin), 178.

<sup>181</sup> Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 1236. My translation from the French. This comes from Chapter 1 of the "Way of Perfection." "I felt that I would have laid down a thousand lives to save a single one of all the souls that were being lost there." Teresa of Avila, *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, Translated by E. Allison Peers. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1978), Vol. 2, 3. In French, "Je donnerais mille Vies pour sauver une seule Ame !" It is interesting to note here that the "lost souls," according to Teresa of Avila, were being lost to Lutheranism. On the same page as above she states, "At about this time there came to my notice the harm and havoc that were being wrought in France by these Lutherans and the way in which their unhappy sect was increasing."

<sup>182</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Chemin de la Perfection*, Chapter I. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 554-555.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 718. My translation from the French. In French, "Pour aider à sauver une âme...Je voudrais mourir mille fois !"

sacrifice and prayers at Carmel. One should recall, however, that Thérèse's commitment to pray for souls began prior to entering the convent.

This evangelistic emphasis was a significant part of Thérèse's vocation. She was also interested in praying for priests, a concept inspired by this same section in *Way of Perfection*, where Teresa of Avila states this as the primary duty of a Carmelite: "...I should thus be able to give the Lord some pleasure, and all of us, by busying ourselves in prayer for those who are defenders of the Church, and for the preachers and learned men who defend her..."<sup>184</sup> In chapter three, Teresa of Avila again stresses this call to pray for priests. Therein, she emphasises that the women at Carmel can do nothing to directly be of assistance to Jesus, thus their only recourse is to intercede for these men of God.

## 2. Purgatory

Along with the idea of sacrifice and the saving of souls Thérèse added the burden of purgatory. She quoted her namesake and was willing to spend eternity in purgatory if souls would be saved: "What does it matter for me to stay in purgatory until the end of the world if by my prayers I save one single soul?"<sup>185</sup> This is almost a direct quotation from chapter three in *Way of Perfection*: "After all, what does it matter if I am in Purgatory until the Day of Judgement provided a single soul should be saved through my prayer?"<sup>186</sup> This concept of purgatory is a later addition for Thérèse and is the same quotation referred to in her *Derniers Entretiens*, but with the emphasis on her willingness to go to purgatory—a lack of fear, or resignation.<sup>187</sup>

## 3. Women Equal to Men

In a letter of November 1, 1896, to P. Roulland, one of her spiritual brothers, Thérèse described the night of her conversion. As if to convey the enormity of the experience, her strength and readiness for war, she quoted Teresa of Avila, that she was to equal a strong man. Teresa of Avila had first given this instruction to her followers: "Je veux que vous ne soyez femmes en rien, mais qu'en tout vous égaliez des hommes forts."<sup>188</sup> In the context of *Way of Perfection*, the statement actually addressed how the women in the convent were to relate to one another:

"My life!" "My love!" "My darling!", and such similar things, one or another of which people are always saying. Let such endearing words be kept for your Spouse, for you will be so often and so much alone with Him that you will want to make use of them all, and this His Majesty

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<sup>184</sup> Teresa of Avila, *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*. Vol. II, 3.

<sup>185</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Chemin de la Perfection*, Chapter III. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 580. My translation from the French.

<sup>186</sup> Teresa of Avila. *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, Vol. II, 12.

<sup>187</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Chemin de la Perfection*, Chapter III. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 1008.

<sup>188</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Chemin de la Perfection*, Chapter VIII. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 559.



permits you. If you use them among yourselves, they will not move the Lord as much; and, quite apart from that, there is no reason why you should do so. They are very effeminate; and I should not like you to be like that, or even to appear to be like that in any way, my daughters; I want you be strong men. If you do all that is in you, the Lord will make you so manly that men themselves will be amazed by you.<sup>189</sup>

The primary theme of this passage (see first underlining above) suggested that words of tenderness be saved for one's "Spouse." Yet, after making this point, Teresa of Avila passionately expressed her desire for the women to resist feminine weakness, doing everything to be equal to the strongest of men (see second underlining above). Moreover, she claimed that if they would do what was within them to do, the Lord would give them masculine courage that would astonish even the men. Quite a powerful feminist statement from a sixteenth-century Spanish nun!

As such, it probably would not have been welcome in the Catholic milieu even at the end of the nineteenth century. However, one must remember this idea was not included in Thérèse's autobiography, rather only in a private letter. In that context, one can deduce the reasoning behind the use of this quotation was to show that she had taken Teresa of Avila's challenge. Thérèse was not a simple woman, but a warrior: "...Ste Thérèse n'aurait pas voulu me reconnaître pour son enfant si le Seigneur ne m'avait revêtu de sa force divine, s'il ne m'avait lui-même armé pour la guerre."<sup>190</sup>

Although this quotation is found only one time, the fact of its presence implies Teresa of Avila's influence regarding women's equality. Other hints in Thérèse's work might possibly be seen in her constant desire to take on the roles of men, such as a priest, apostle or missionary, or, in this case, a warrior. Joan of Arc is another example found in Thérèse's writings. Women's equality was a constant theme in Thérèse's writings, implying a consistent rejection of the female stereotype of her day. Her inspiration on this issue was unquestionably Teresa of Avila.

#### **4. Love brings Suffering**

In the writings of Teresa of Avila, love was seen as a means for reward: "To those who love more he gives more, to those who love less he gives less."<sup>191</sup> This concept of being remunerated for loving was then related to suffering: "...To the souls the good God loves with an ordinary love He gives some tests, but to the souls He loves with a love of favour, these He showers with His cross as a sure sign of His

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<sup>189</sup> Teresa of Avila, *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, Vol. 2, 35. My underline.

<sup>190</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, Letter 201 to P. Rouland, 1 November, 1896, 559.

<sup>191</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Chemin de la Perfection*, Chapter XXXIII. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 379. My translation from the French.

tenderness.”<sup>192</sup> This also speaks to the issue of suffering; those whom God loves will be chosen to suffer more, as a sign of His tender affection, nearly a direct quote from *Way of Perfection*, where Teresa of Avila defined suffering in terms of the depth of one’s adoration: “As for me, I am convinced the measure of our strength to endure suffering is the measure of our love...”<sup>193</sup> Here Thérèse found support for this association: “If I love Jesus more, then I will suffer more.”<sup>194</sup>

## 5. God’s Judgement based on the Heart, not External Actions

Thérèse in her time at Carmel moved away from the legalistic framework in which she was raised. She adopted the words of Teresa of Avila to provide support for her new idea, obviously a change from her home environment: “...our Father who sees the secret, who looks more at the intentions...”<sup>195</sup> As this was written in the last months of her life, it was important to her to communicate this ideal. She again conveyed the same message in letter 65 to Céline, only the emphasis was on one’s motive.<sup>196</sup>

## 6. Non-confrontational

While this subject was already mentioned in our earlier focus on *The Imitation* and although it is not a direct quote from Teresa of Avila, it is nonetheless a concept supported in Thérèse’s work. Teresa of Avila’s focus was, in essence, endure the faults of others since they are enduring yours.<sup>197</sup>

## 7. Dying or Not Dying

In *Derniers Entretiens*, Thérèse rejected the idea of her namesake, who on her deathbed said, “Je me meurs de ne point mourir,”<sup>198</sup> that is, being hopeless about not yet having died or wishing she were dead. In fact, Thérèse declared, “On ne pourra pas dire de moi...”<sup>199</sup>, that is, “One cannot say of me (that I wish I were dead).”<sup>200</sup> For Thérèse desired whatever God required of her, even if it meant further suffering.

<sup>192</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Chemin de la Perfection*, Chapter XXXIV. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 518. My translation from the French.

<sup>193</sup> Teresa of Avila. *Œuvres de Sainte Thérèse, Tome Troisième, Œuvres Mystiques, Chemin de la Perfection – Le château Intérieur*. Translated by Le P. Marcel Bouix. (Paris: Libraire Victor Lecoffre, 1925), 184. My translation from the French.

<sup>194</sup> My paraphrase.

<sup>195</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Château Intérieur*, VII<sup>es</sup> Demeures, Chapter IV. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 273. My translation from the French.

<sup>196</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Château Intérieur*, VII<sup>es</sup> Demeures, Chapter IV. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 360. My translation from the French.

<sup>197</sup> Teresa of Avila. *Œuvres de Sainte Thérèse, Tome troisième, Œuvres Mystiques, Chemin de la Perfection*, 49.

<sup>198</sup> Teresa of Avila, Poetry. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 1073, 1122.

<sup>199</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, Le Carnet Jaune, August 2, (Page) 1073.

<sup>200</sup> My paraphrase.



## 8. The Eagle and the Little Bird

In Manuscript B, there is an interesting illustration about an eagle (representing the great saints) and a small bird (representing Thérèse): “I consider myself to be a weak, little bird covered only with light, wispy feathers.”<sup>201</sup> The context of this statement was Thérèse’s desire to demonstrate fullness of love for Jesus, which was not at all the pursuit of Teresa of Avila, who spoke of the difficulties of “oraison” or mental prayer. In all three references in *Vie de sainte Thérèse écrite par elle-même*,<sup>202</sup> Chapters 13, 19, and 20, the focus is on mental prayer, as opposed to how best to love Jesus, with no reference to an eagle or bird. So while the words are similar, they cannot be attributed to Teresa of Avila. In fact, Teresa of Avila appears to have been more of a mystic than was Thérèse: “...My soul took off, my head almost always followed...and sometimes my whole body even took off in such a way that it no longer touched the ground...”<sup>203</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Teresa of Avila was an important and foundational influence in Thérèse’s life in many areas, including the structure of the convent, namely, The Rule and organisation of one’s daily life. Thérèse followed with great diligence these regulations, thus the significance thereof cannot be overstated. In addition, the importance of saving souls was adopted from Teresa, although there was already an emphasis on this in Thérèse’s family. It is possible that Thérèse’s desire to save souls, in particular the event of Pranzini, was transmitted by Pauline, who was already in the convent and under the influence of Teresa of Avila. Feminism was another theme clearly taken from Teresa. In this context, it was defined as the power of women to achieve exploits for God without being restricted by femininity. The value of suffering was another strong theme with Teresa and comes through equally strong in Thérèse’s writings. Finally, the repeated emphasis on purgatory can also be traced back to Teresa of Avila, and while this was a part of Thérèse’s earliest life, it was endorsed and reinforced by this founder of the Carmelite order.

## C. JOHN OF THE CROSS

John of the Cross was born in 1542, the son of Gonzalo of Yepes. His father died when he was young, as did one of his older brothers, and at the age of 20, he joined the Carmes monastery. Finishing his education in Salamanca, he returned in 1567 to celebrate his first mass in Medina. There he met Teresa

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<sup>201</sup> Teresa of Avila, Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, Manuscript B, 229. My translation from the French.

<sup>202</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Œuvres de Sainte Thérèse, Tome Premier, Vie de sainte Thérèse écrite par elle-même*. Translated by Le P. Marcel Bouix. (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1927).

of Avila and was asked to join in her work. Two years later he founded a monastery in Duruelo, where Teresa requested that he become the spiritual confessor for the Monastery of the Incarnation in Avila, in 1577. Opponents of the reform kidnapped him and locked him in the monastery at Toledo, from where he wrote the first of his great poems in seclusion and after nine months escaped. Following the death of Teresa of Avila, he became the director of the convent of Grenade, where his greatest works were written. After being rejected by the reform movement, he retired to a hermitage in 1591 and died a few months later. John of the Cross is best known for *Living Flame of Love*, *Spiritual Canticle*, *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *Dark Night of the Soul*. Thérèse used the edition of his works that was printed in 1875.

### 1. Impact of His Writing

Thérèse of Lisieux entered Carmel in April of 1888. The first reference to the writings of John of the Cross is in a letter to Céline dated July of 1890, and is a fragment of *Ascent of Carmel*. One finds almost 100 references to the work of John of the Cross in Thérèse's writings, the most of any author except for scripture. The two most significant books were *Spiritual Cantiques* (57 references) and *Living Flame of Love* (16 references). The former of these works, because of its relationship to the idea of love, fit well into Thérèse's themes and was used extensively by her. Even though there were more references to his work than to *The Imitation*, it is my opinion that *The Imitation* had more influence.

#### a. The Payment of Love with Love

A phrase that is repeated several times in Manuscripts A and B, as well as the Letters, is, "L'Amour ne se paie que par L'Amour,"<sup>204</sup> that is, "Love can only be repaid with love," a direct quotation from *Spiritual Canticles*, Strophe IX.<sup>205</sup> Although this same idea is repeated again and again, there are several variations. In letter 109, one finds, "...l'amour ne se guérit que par l'amour!"<sup>206</sup> The repetition of this same thought at least five times suggests a significant dependence concerning love on John of the Cross, who finishes the Strophe with, "...the soul which loves God must not claim or expect anything from Him except the perfecting of that love."<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Teresa of Avila, *Vie écrite par elle-même*. (Editions Stock, 1981), 209-210. My translation from French.

<sup>204</sup> John of the Cross. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 214, 220, 227, 385, 224, 415.

<sup>205</sup> John of the Cross. *Œuvres Complètes*. (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1967), 566. The translation is quite different in this quotation, most likely due to the vast time difference between dates of publication. Also, it is important to note that this version of *Œuvres Complètes* is from the works of John of the Cross and not Thérèse.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 415.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 567. My translation from the French.



### **b. Love is Greater than All Work**

A similar statement is quoted four times regarding the relationship of works and love, as found in two letters, a prayer and Manuscript B: "The smallest gesture of pure love is more useful for the Church than all of the works put together."<sup>208</sup> Because it is a direct quotation and also because of the repetition in Thérèse's writings, it would be logical to conclude that she borrowed the idea since it was foundational to her emphasis on love.

### **c. Burning Love**

Twice concerning the death of souls, Thérèse stated that they were consumed in love.<sup>209</sup> The idea of love and fire is expressed by "Your burning love..."<sup>210</sup> Again, the key word is love: "Love is so powerful in works that it takes control of everything...and changes my soul into His."<sup>211</sup> Here love is once more emphasised as able to accomplish anything.

### **d. Suffer and Be Despised<sup>212</sup>**

A passionate theme for Thérèse, taken from John of the Cross, was the idea of suffering accompanied by rejection. In the title to letter 188 on May 7, 1896, written to her sister Marie, Thérèse wrote, "Par Amour, souffrir et être méprisée."<sup>213</sup> The words "suffer and be despised" are also found in four other places with minor variations. It may be that these particular ideas were essential to her "little way". Regardless, it must be remembered that both of these ideas are present in *The Imitation*.

### **e. No need for a Spiritual Director**

The only guide that Thérèse required, according to her, was the one in her heart: "I had neither guide nor light except that which burned in my heart; this light guided me more surely than the sun to the location where the one who knows me perfectly was waiting."<sup>214</sup> In the 1967 version, it reads as follows: "...Sans autre lueur ni guide...hors celle qui brûlait en mon cœur."<sup>215</sup> Thérèse was strongly affirmed by

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<sup>208</sup> John of the Cross; *Les Cantiques Spirituels*; Strophe XXIX. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 577, 601, 969. My translation from the French. In French it reads as follows: "Le plus petit mouvement de pur amour est plus utile à l'Eglise que toute les œuvres réunies." (577)

<sup>209</sup> John of the Cross; *Les Cantiques Spirituels*; Strophe XXIX. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 1091, 1118.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, Strophe II,5. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 691. My translation from the French.

<sup>211</sup> John of the Cross, *Poemes, Glose sur le divin*. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 210. My translation from the French.

<sup>212</sup> The word in French here is *méprisée*. It could perhaps be better translated as neglected.

<sup>213</sup> John of the Cross, *Maximes et Avis Spirituels*, N° 129. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 536, 194, 380, 528, 531. Thérèse adds the words "Par Amour" to the original quotation in the first of these three occasions.

<sup>214</sup> John of the Cross, *Nuit Obscure*, Book III and IV. Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 149. My translation from the French.

<sup>215</sup> John of the Cross. *Œuvres Complètes*, 380.

both founders of the Carmel that personal direction from God was all she had need of, again an idea found in *The Imitation*.

## CONCLUSION

Johns of the Cross' writings helped Thérèse realize the importance, the value, of love. *Spiritual Cantiques*, because of its poetic nature and inherent emphasis on this subject, was critical in supporting Thérèse's emphasis on love. I believe that without his influence, Thérèse would not have underlined love to the degree she did. His work gave her the determination to set love as the pinnacle in her structure of piety.

## D. SCRIPTURE

### INTRODUCTION

The matter of the use of scripture is of great significance in evaluating Thérèse's works and in the general assessment of her importance as regards Church History. Thérèse quoted scripture several hundred times and is seen by some as having radically changed the Church's overall view towards scripture. Others say that she was a prophet who influenced the changes of Vatican II. To begin, one must examine her use of scripture: What were her preferred passages and how did she interpret them?

This is a sizable task and exceeds the scope of this work, if done in detail. I counted approximately 160 quotations or references to scripture from the Psalms alone, and approximately 167 from just the Gospel of Matthew. Luke adds another 161 and John an additional 156. Although for Thérèse these were the four most commonly quoted books, one can get an idea of the vast amount of scripture she used. In order to reduce the size of this task to something manageable for this chapter, I generally only refer to passages of scripture she referenced at least three or four times. It seems logical to conclude that a passage cited multiple times was held in high regard and purposefully incorporated into her teachings.

The influence of the Divine Office on monastic life is well known and remained basically unchanged from the sixth century until Vatican II.<sup>216</sup> One could safely assume that Thérèse's familiarity with the Psalms came from her daily recitation of the Breviary. As in all monastic communities, the foundation of the Breviary was from the Psalter. All or at least a portion of each of the 150 psalms would

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<sup>216</sup> Robert Taft. *The Liturgy of the Hours in the East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning for Today*. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 307.



be read during the course of hours of prayer.<sup>217</sup> *Le Psautier Liturgique* (1944) lists the following psalms for the hours of prayer on Mondays: Matins: 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 29; Lauds: 45, 5, 28, 116; Prime: 23, 18; Terce: 26, 27; Sext: 30; None: 31, 32; Vespers: 114, 115, 119, 120, 121; Compline: 6, 7.<sup>218</sup> It is obvious that daily prayer of the psalms of this scope would have had a significant impact.

Four factors are clear from the study of Thérèse's use of scripture. First, she had committed many passages to memory. This is obvious from the multiple references to various passages with slightly different wording, indicating that she was not copying them down. Second, certain words or phrases were adopted simply as a title or representation of a specific idea which she wished to repeatedly reference. Third, she often did not consider the context of a passage or its originally intended meaning. Fourth, theologically speaking, what she neglected to address indicates much about what she did and did not believe.

### **1. Thérèse's Memorisation of Scripture**

Thérèse refers six times to Exodus 17:9-13, where Joshua went into battle against the Amalekites and Moses stayed on the mountain to pray for him. As long as Moses' hands were raised Joshua prevailed, but his arms grew weary; so Aaron and Hur had to hold up his arms.

With each reference, Thérèse uses different wording. In letter 135 to Céline, she says: "...vous êtes mes Moïse priant sur la montagne..."<sup>219</sup> In letter 106<sup>220</sup> there is a rather oblique reference to the same story about Joshua in the battle while on the plains. In letters 189 and 201, *Récréations Pieuses*, and prayer number 8 she also refers to this passage. In all of these quotations, the idea is derived from the same text in Exodus, but is slightly modified. While this does not prove that it was memorised, the wide usage lends support to the opinion that she had in some fashion learned it by heart. Along with the large number of quotations that sometimes flow from one into the next, it implies that she had likely committed to memory prolific amounts of scripture.

### **2. Use of Words and Phrases as Titles**

Some of Thérèse's use of scripture is disjointed from the original context, as if she had taken a specific name and used it as a title to represent an idea. One example of this is several references to 1 Kings 19:10-14, where Thérèse selected this title for God to represent the important subject of war and

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<sup>217</sup> Jean-Julien Weber. *Le Psautier du Bréviaire Romain, quatrième édition*. (Paris, Desclée & Cie, 1948), 884-887.

<sup>218</sup> *Le Psautier Liturgique*. (St.-Maurice, Suisse: Editions de l'œuvre St.-Augustin, 1944), 382-383.

<sup>219</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, Letter 135, 449.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid*, Letter 106, 410.

warriors: “Dieu des armées.” This is seen in Poems 4, 48 and 50; *Récréations Pieuses* 3; and prayers 17 and 18. In all of these instances, “Dieu des armées” is used as a name for God or a title describing Him. It is completely divorced from the context of 1 Kings and only has theological significance insofar as one can interpret Thérèse’s meaning, which seems to lie in the image of warriors, war and battle—a common theme in her role as a Carmelite. Although there are six references to this text, the theological significance is diminished because it is used more as a title than as an important theological text. Two other examples are her reference to the Song of Songs 2:1, where the lover is referred to as a flower or lily of the valley, and in John 1:1, where Jesus is referred to as the “Word.” This same title is used more than 10 times from each of these last two texts, indicating its import to Thérèse.

### 3. Re-interpretation or Changing of Meaning

The highly significant passage of Isaiah 53:3 speaks of the suffering servant and his rejection by man. The context, from a New Testament perspective, is the beautiful description of the sacrifice of this suffering servant and his atoning death, made particularly clear in verses 5 and 6. In the midst of his torturous death, the people hid their faces from him.<sup>221</sup> In Manuscript A, Thérèse references this scripture, saying: “Mon visage soit vraiment caché, que sur la terre personne ne me reconnaisse.”<sup>222</sup> In Isaiah, his face was distorted because of the torture, pain and suffering. The preferred interpretation of Edward J. Young is that the crowd hid their faces because of the ugliness of the suffering one. Claus Westermann suggests that the servant may have been a leper, but surely he was loathed and rejected by the community.<sup>223</sup> F. Duane Lindsey states that the phrase in question would be translated as “‘a hiding of faces from him’ (or ‘from us’).”<sup>224</sup> But the context according to Lindsey, and I agree, indicates the reaction of men to the servant. The Latin translation available to Thérèse perhaps did not help clarify this issue. Her interpretation, although doubtful in my opinion, may be valid. Regardless, the primary purpose of the chapter was not to hide one’s face, but to recognise the important work of the servant, which from our side of the cross we can see as redemption. For Thérèse, a minor element in the story was made the focus: she wanted her face to be hidden as well, so that she would not be recognised but forgotten. The theme of being hidden fit well with her “little way,” but perhaps not as well with the actual text. As was

<sup>221</sup> The verb can imply hiding from either direction, either the servant or the crowd. Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Volume III. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 344.

<sup>222</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, Manuscript A, 189.

<sup>223</sup> Claus Westermann. *Isaiah 40-66 A Commentary*. (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1966).

<sup>224</sup> Duane Lindsey. *A Study in Isaiah: The Servant Songs*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 117.



sometimes her custom, she emphasised a minor idea in the text, making it the centrepiece because it corresponded with her views.

This same idea of the “hidden face” is repeated in letters 116, 117, 137, 140, 145, 183, 216, the poems, and *Récréations Pieuses*. Although humility is part of the image portrayed in Isaiah 53, Thérèse ignored what I would consider the more important issues in the text.

The tradition of the “Holy Face” dates from a fourth-century apocryphal gospel entitled *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, where one is introduced to the famous Veronica, who supposedly wiped the face of Jesus shortly after leaving Pilate’s fortress beaten and bleeding.<sup>225</sup> Even the Catholic Encyclopedia (1912) admits there is no documentation for this famed tradition. In fact, the name comes from the Latin words *vera icon* meaning “true image”; common usage later resulted in Veronica. Many other traditions relate to the “Holy Face,” such as the Shroud of Turin, but the legend of Veronica is the earliest. Many other representations of the “Holy Face” remain in circulation in the Catholic Church today, so in that sense Thérèse’s emphasis followed a common Catholic tradition made even more popular by the layman Charles Dupont of Tours.<sup>226</sup> One such tradition came from the *Volto Santo* of Lucca, Italy, which legend says was painted by Nicodemus, with the help of angels, and set adrift at sea until it finally washed ashore. To this day, it is carried in processions on September 13, the feast day of its arrival in Lucca.<sup>227</sup> This is one illustration of Thérèse’s reinterpretation of scripture which resulted in a mistaken conclusion.

Throughout her writings, it is fascinating to see how she interpreted scripture. Obviously, there is a broad range of interpretation of doctrine within Christianity, but Thérèse often radically altered a word or simple idea to fit her own doctrines. An example of this is found in the words of Christ on the cross in John 19. 28, “I thirst.” Her interpretation is possibly based on the idea of Augustine, that Jesus was thirsting for their faith, an analogy of the Samaritan woman.<sup>228</sup> There can be many layers of interpretation from a text such as this, but a simple interpretation would suggest that He was dying and was thirsty. The context follows the recognition of nearing the completion of His work, and His throat is parched. I would suggest that Thérèse possibly took a minor or even remote idea and made it the focus when the meaning of the text is quite clear. I would praise her desire to evangelise, but also believe there are so many better-suited texts as a motive.

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<sup>225</sup> Marie-Madeleine Martin. *Sainte Véronique et le culte de la Sainte Face*. (Condé-sur-Noireau, France: Corlet, Imprimeur, S.A., 1990), 17-18.

<sup>226</sup> Nevin, 56.

<sup>227</sup> Michael Walsh. *A Dictionary of Devotions*. (Tunbridge Wells, UK: Burns & Oats, 1993), 281.

#### 4. Scriptures Thérèse did not Quote

There are a vast number of scriptural references in Thérèse's writings, with some of them being repetitious and others disconnected from the context, but what is of even greater significance are the scriptures Thérèse simply failed to mention in her writings. Anything that supported the ideas of her "little way" was used or reinterpreted to fit her demands. The Gospels were of great help to her in this task; however, what about the rest of scripture? In the first three chapters of Romans, for example, only one verse was deemed important: Romans 3:24. She selected very little from this valuable book and the same can be said for Galatians. She may have shied away from these two books in order to avoid the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, but that would raise other questions in terms of her usefulness to contemporary writers who see her as a catalyst for Vatican II. Her minimal use of Romans and Galatians will be given greater significance as we continue.

Thérèse mentions only one passage from the book of Ephesians concerning the armour of God, in Chapter 6. The rest is ignored, even though there are some essential passages of scripture therein. The mountain of verses Thérèse apparently opted to ignore is far more striking than those she selected, overused, or reinterpreted to fit her "little way".

Much emphasis is placed on the amount of scripture Thérèse incorporated in her writings, and this may be worthy of mention in comparison to others of her day. Some of her bias towards the Gospels may be explained by Roman Catholic tradition which requires the use of the Gospels at every mass. Still, the vast majority of the New Testament went unexplored by Thérèse, excluding a great wealth of scriptural information. Compared to the average Catholic of her day, her knowledge of scripture was impressive, but her overall use of the New Testament was highly selective.

## CONCLUSION

In recent years, Thérèse has been lauded for her use of and emphasis on scripture, which is extensive but not impressive by today's standards. She did commit to memory many passages and was sufficiently knowledgeable to put them to use at a moment's notice. Certain words or phrases became favourites and were used repeatedly. Significant passages were reinterpreted or removed from their context to fit a particular notion. Most noteworthy are the scriptures Thérèse neglected to utilise; the absence of these foundational biblical passages makes her views limited in perspective and theology.

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<sup>228</sup> Joel Elowsky, Editor. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament IVb John 11-21*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 321.



Thérèse was unquestionably shaped by the combined influences before and during her time at Carmel. She inherited from her family a deep reverence for God, a desire to be holy, and a means by which to arrive at that holiness: the religious life. *The Imitation* formed her most significant views about holiness: to become nothing, to suffer, to love Jesus, and to comprehend the power of love to overcome all difficulties. Her view of Jesus as her teacher was critical in shaping her independent thinking in later years. Her distance with regard to personal relationships and her non-confrontational attitude were also adopted from *The Imitation*, as were her desire for and love of heaven and eternity.

During the time at Carmel, her life was most deeply influenced by The Rule of the community, which she followed almost to the letter. The writings of Teresa of Avila inspired her calling, praying for souls, and her attitude about women being equal to men. As well, purgatory was reinforced and related to praying for souls. Love was emphasised and was connected to suffering. The idea of God's judgement being based upon the heart and not external actions came from Teresa of Avila, who also reinforced the habit of being non-confrontational. Although Teresa preferred to die instead of suffer, Thérèse instead wished to continue suffering if God so willed.

John of the Cross in his writings, in particular *Spiritual Canticles*, helped Thérèse define and explain love. The intensity of love was central in his texts, as was the concept that love is greater than all works. He also emphasised themes found in *The Imitation* that one should suffer and be despised. Further, he supported the belief that a spiritual director was unnecessary.

Through the influence of *The Imitation*, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, one can point to the seeds of Thérèse's famous "little way". It may have also been the writings of John of the Cross that initiated the process of Thérèse's release from early habits of counting acts of sacrifice, an internal conflict already highlighted at length. The next step then is to examine what others have written concerning Thérèse in the years following her death up to the time of Vatican II.

## **SECTION 3 - EARLY PUBLISHED OPINIONS**

### **A. KEY QUESTIONS**

One of the objectives in this thesis is to compare the themes of Thérèse's piety in the early part of the twentieth century to those of the latter part of the twentieth century. In order to accomplish this, one must first identify the primary elements of her sanctity. Some of this has already been addressed above in focusing on the influences in her life. I have also selected three books from the period between her beatification and Vatican II. These sources will show how the ideas of piety significant in the life of Thérèse began to change.

The first section deals with several key questions in examining the first published works regarding Thérèse's piety. To begin, did the evidence in Thérèse's Trials follow the pattern required by Roman Catholic tradition for those aspiring to beatification? Next, how do these authors perceive Thérèse's piety and what changes took place with regard to her piety? Finally, were these norms of piety static or evolving within their cultural context?

### **B. RESOURCES**

#### **1. The Trials for Thérèse's Beatification**

The most significant source is the information from the Trials for Thérèse's beatification: the first, in 1910, called the Ordinary Informative Process; the second, in 1915, called the Apostolic Process. The second Trial is of greater interest regarding cultural or theological influence, as the responses were more prepared and thus reflect a more precise definition of Roman Catholic sanctity at that time.

#### **2. Early Authors**

The first writer we will examine is Gabriel Martin, whose book published in 1923 is one of the early works concerning Thérèse, having been written after she was beatified but before she was canonised. Here Martin connects the idea of the "ascenseur"<sup>229</sup> with the sacrifice to merciful love. The second book we will examine is by Hyacinthe Petitot, published in 1925, just after Thérèse's canonisation, and provides a view of how she was perceived following the declaration of her sainthood. In the preface to his book, Petitot suggests that Thérèse introduced a new model of sanctity, setting aside certain practices that

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<sup>229</sup> The "lift" is a theme introduced in Manuscript C and describes Thérèse's search for a shortcut to sanctity. It is a modern invention (mid-nineteenth century) that she saw on a trip to Rome. This spiritual idea can be contrasted to the "ladder" method of sanctity so often referred to by some of the great saints. Thérèse found this ladder too demanding.



for centuries were considered the marks of a saint.<sup>230</sup> Finally, Stéphane-Joseph Piat wrote concerning the life of Thérèse and many of her family members. I selected this book because of its publication prior to Vatican II.

## **I. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC PATTERN FOR BEATIFICATION**

### **A. THE LIST OF VIRTUES**

What are the virtues required in Catholic tradition to be a saint? They include the three Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity, as well as the four cardinal virtues of fortitude, justice, prudence, and temperance. For the religious orders, one must add the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, in addition to the rules of the respective communities. Following the tradition of Thomas Aquinas other virtues were added, such as patience, constancy, humility, and so on, usually connected to one of the previously-listed virtues. In the Trial, each of these virtues was individually examined.

Since Thérèse was not a martyr, the only possible way for her to become a saint in Catholic tradition was to show evidence of heroic virtue. In the Ordinary Process, evidence is presented for heroic virtue in each of the following areas: faith, hope, love for God, wisdom (*la prudence*), justice, poverty, chastity, obedience, strength (*la force*), moderation (*la temperance*), humility, and supernatural gifts. As would be expected, this list is a perfect duplicate of what is required according to Catholic tradition. During the Apostolic Process, only one other was added, love of neighbour;<sup>231</sup> during the Ordinary Process it was included under “love for God.”<sup>232</sup>

Does the evidence from Thérèse’s Trial adhere to Catholic tradition? Unquestionably, yes. The agreement between Catholic tradition and the list of virtues in her Trials for beatification is what one would expect. Significant change would not have been possible in the process prior to Vatican II. One might naturally ask if this is the appropriate way to define holiness. A hundred years ago in the Catholic Church, it was the only way. As one examines the influences of culture, and then eventually looks at changes in the Catholic Church, it becomes evident that even in Catholic tradition sanctity has moved beyond the virtues listed above. Even if the current list of virtues is similar, the understanding of what they represent has unmistakably changed.

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<sup>230</sup> Petitot. *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux: Une Renaissance Spirituelle*. (Paris: Desclée, 1925), 16.

<sup>231</sup> Bibliotheca Carmelitica, Series 1, textus 3. *Procès de Béatification et Canonisation de Sainte Thérèse de L'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face. II Procès Apostolique*. (Rome: Teresianum, 1976), 40.

<sup>232</sup> *Procès Apostolique*, 35.

The most significant modification has taken place in the area of what is viewed as holy. The current process of making saints, established in January 1983, is less concerned with what people say about the prospective saint and more concerned with the person's actual attributes. The deeper motivations are considered, giving sanctity an almost psychological flavour. The Catholic Church has rejected the 1920s method of choosing a saint. Although there are many similarities that remain, the adaptations since the time when Thérèse was beatified are considerable.

## **B. ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED OR DIMINISHED**

Three issues from the Apostolic Process where one finds a significantly shorter summary than the version in the Ordinary Process are of interest in the story of Thérèse's life. The first concerns the serious illness that ravaged her when she was only six years old and was said to have come "certainement du démon,"<sup>233</sup> leaving no room for speculation. It is my opinion, however, that this illness was more than likely related to the loss of her mother followed by the loss of her "little mother" Pauline. The psychological shock of these losses was not addressed.

The second interesting issue is that Thérèse's conversion, during Christmas of 1886, is not mentioned in the Apostolic Process,<sup>234</sup> although it was by her own acknowledgement of great significance. I would suggest that the reasons for this had to do with what was considered important for a person to be seen as holy from a Catholic sacramental perspective. The sacraments in Thérèse's life are mentioned in detail throughout the course of the Apostolic Process. It appears that in the process of declaring someone a saint, the priority is the referencing of sacraments as opposed to an event that may have been deemed significant by the individual.

The third issue relates to the period of time near the end of Thérèse's life. The fact that she had grappled with doubts about faith is overlooked in the historical summary of the Trial. It is briefly addressed elsewhere, but is not considered a key issue. It is my opinion that for Thérèse, however, this struggle was of great consequence. Thus the lesson one learns from the Apostolic Process is that the life of a "saint" is moulded to fit the standard responses of the Catholic Church, which is hardly a revelation.

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<sup>233</sup> *Procès Apostolique*, 21.

<sup>234</sup> It is mentioned briefly later on in the information about virtues, but not explained in the summaries. In the Ordinary Process, the information about her life is more detailed, however, the critical information regarding her father and the internal change in her life are not mentioned, only the desire to pray for souls to be saved.



## C. TESTIMONIES OF THE MIRACULOUS

Many miracles are listed in Thérèse's Ordinary Process. The initial question is, were they legitimate? At first glance, one must say that it seems improbable that the hagiographers would have invented all of these stories. Moreover, it is possible considering the state of science at that time that some individuals were spontaneously healed without divine intervention. And finally, there were likely some healings that were legitimately from God.

Of particular interest was a healing of a small girl, only four years of age.<sup>235</sup> Her illness was diagnosed as an inflamed cornea that began in January of 1906. In addition, there were opaque spots on the cornea and blood in her eye. Her eyes were no longer functioning and the child was in great pain. In order to reduce the hurting, she would keep her eyes closed and wear sunglasses. Her mother was encouraged to bring her to the tomb of Thérèse and she had also requested a "neuvaine de prières." There she lit a candle to the Virgin Mary in honor of Thérèse. Upon returning home, the little girl was completely healed. Later the doctor said that the ulcerations on the cornea would have had to heal slowly over a long period of time, not in a matter of hours. This miracle and many others are credited to the intercession of Thérèse. I would grant that this appears to have been a miraculous healing. Surely there are other legitimate miracles among the hundreds of stories recorded by the Carmel of Lisieux. More will be said concerning miracles in the final chapter of this work.

## II. EARLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

### A. GABRIEL MARTIN – 1923

In his book, Martin tries to focus on the issue of the "little way", calling it "la petite voie d'enfance spirituelle."<sup>236</sup> His entire book fits into this general theme of childhood simplicity. He begins by equating the littleness and weakness of a child to humility. Quoting Thérèse, it is not difficult to construct the theme of humility, but it seems a stretch to suggest the Thérèse's humility was as absolute and uncompromising as a child. All three authors, Martin, Petitot, and Piat, mention this humility as being essential in Thérésian theology.

In considering Martin, one must understand his motives and goals, one of which becomes clear in a statement in chapter six concerning love: "Le Chrétien est parfait lorsqu'il a atteint la perfection de

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<sup>235</sup> *Procès Apostolique*, 77-79.

<sup>236</sup> Gabriel Martin. *La "Petite Voie" D'Enfance Spirituelle*. (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1923), 6.

toutes les vertus.”<sup>237</sup> The emphasis on the perfection of virtue is an obvious attempt to support and submit to the Roman Catholic opinion of sanctity. In order for Thérèse to be beatified, she must have lived a life of heroic virtue.

In chapter five, one of two chapters on love, Martin compliments Thérèse’s mother for having been so wise in teaching her daughter the habit of making little sacrifices for God’s love. Martin correctly views love as the centre-point of Thérésian theology: love was her vocation. The problem is that the spirit by which Martin encourages this life of little sacrifices leaves one void of joyous Christianity: “Car il s’agit de ne laisser échapper aucun petit sacrifice.”<sup>238</sup> This rigid counting of acts of love is reminiscent of the tradition at Carmel, which is considered superfluous in this twenty-first century.

As mentioned previously, chapter six holds the key moment in Martin’s book, where he connects the offering of sacrificial love to the “little way”, an unlikely connection because of the lack of emphasis in Manuscript C on the Sacrifice (there is in fact no mention of it). One has to question why this “act of sacrifice to merciful love” was so important to Martin. There is a hint of an answer in his statement on purgatory:

Cependant il serait téméraire de penser qu’il suffise d’avoir prononcé la formule de l’acte d’offrande pour échapper à toute condamnation et éviter ainsi le purgatoire. La Bienheureuse a pris soin de dire que les paroles seules ne sauraient suffire. *Il faut s’être livré réellement et totalement. Car on n’est consumé par l’amour qu’autant qu’on se livre à l’amour.*<sup>239</sup>

This citation indicates that many were encouraged to say the prayer of sacrifice to merciful love in order to avoid purgatory. Martin was caught in the bondage of the doctrine of purgatory. In his mind the “sacrifice to merciful love” would free one from this punishment, a deeply flawed theology and practice. Despite Martin’s attempt to draw attention to the “little way”, he instead turned “la voie d’enfance spirituelle” into a desperate effort to avoid purgatory. Martin also includes an indulgence where those who repeat Thérèse’s prayer could avoid 300 days in purgatory:

Indulgences attachées à perpétuité à la récitation de l’Acte d’Offrande, composé par la Bienheureuse Thérèse e l’Enfant-Jésus. 1° Une indulgence partielle de trois cents jours, toutes les fois que les fidèles réciteront, d’un cœur contrit et avec dévotion, l’offrande ci-dessus...une indulgence plénière chaque mois, aux conditions ordinaires à quiconque aura récité cet acte tous les jours du mois. (Donné à Rome, à la S. Pénitencerie, le 31 Juillet 1923.)<sup>240</sup>

In the end, it appears that Martin’s elaborate explanation of Thérèse’s “little way” and his attempt to connect it to the sacrifice of merciful love was merely a reflection of his own daunting fear of purgatory.

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<sup>237</sup> Gabriel Martin, 64.

<sup>238</sup> Gabriel Martin, 55.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, 82. The italics are in the original and indicate a quotation from Thérèse of Lisieux in “*Conseils et souvenirs*.”



Piat seems to have had a better grasp on this issue 25 years later when he focused on Thérèse's distancing from purgatory, providing an interesting theological twist. The view within the Catholic Church context was that Thérèse would not spend time in purgatory because her life had been so perfect. She, however, rebuked her novices for even thinking in this way: "Vous faites une grande injure au bon Dieu en croyant aller en Purgatoire. Quand on aime, il ne peut y avoir de Purgatoire."<sup>241</sup> While she said there was no purgatory with love, her other comments conflicted with this radical statement. One finds in Thérèse a blend of fear and confidence in trying to overcome purgatory, and her innovation of love prevailing over it was something new, but Martin failed to observe this.

There is also another reason for Martin's error concerning the "sacrifice of merciful love." He would have liked to make the offering the finale for the "little way", an emphasis that I believe was related to the order of the manuscripts in the early-published editions. Manuscript B was located at the end of *Histoire d'une Ame* until the 1950s. So at this early time, even though this manuscript may have been identified as having been written to Thérèse's sister Marie at an earlier date, the order of the manuscripts was incorrect.

This raises an important question: Was the sacrifice to merciful love the centre of her theology or was it the "little way"? It is my belief that Martin was closer to describing the "little way" when he called it the way of humility or the way of abandonment than in connecting it to the sacrifice of merciful love. Although the theme of love was central to Thérèse, the issue of sacrifice would have connected it too closely to merit and counting. Merit is based on the Catholic understanding of community, but according to Protestant doctrine, merit has no basis in scripture, whether for oneself or others. The only one with merit, of course, is Christ. Theologically, Thérèse did not break with the Catholic Church, as some Protestants have, in declaring purgatory to be a theological error. Instead she found a means by which to avoid purgatory that was clearly outside the accepted path of heroic virtue and body-abusing penance.

## **B. HYACINTHE PETITOT – 1925**

In contrast to the regressive work of Martin, Hyacinth Petitot makes a valiant effort to describe some of the original ideas of Thérèse of Lisieux. The first four chapters of his book focus on what he calls "the negative characteristics" of her piety. In fact, these negative characteristics, according to Petitot, held

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<sup>240</sup> Gabriel Martin, 128.

<sup>241</sup> Stéphane-Joseph Piat. *Marie Guérin, Cousine et novice de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus*. (Lisieux: Office Central De Lisieux, 1950), 81.

her most significantly innovative ideas.<sup>242</sup> While these four characteristics are not at all convincing, he at least attempts to suggest where Thérèse brought change.

### **1. Lack of Extreme Asceticism or Mortifications**

Petitot considers the first negative characteristic of Thérèse's "little way" as the exclusion of all extreme or violent mortifications. In fact, she actually set herself in opposition, stating that the demons could deceive those who followed them and bring dangerous illusions. Petitot notes that the way of little hidden sacrifices was Thérèse's substitute for self-flagellation.<sup>243</sup> It was in the little actions of love which took place by the hundreds every week that Thérèse mortified herself rather than physically punishing her body.

An example of this was her work in the laundry room, choosing the location with the least amount of fresh air.<sup>244</sup> Others included never wiping the sweat from her forehead or covering her hands in the winter. Petitot views these little acts of sacrifice, or faithfulness, to The Rule as equal to or greater than external acts of violent mortification. Thérèse was so faithful, in fact, that he praises her as the most faithful person, superseded only by Mary and Joseph! What was innovative about her attitude toward extreme penance was that she separated herself from extreme physical abuse by saints like Dominic and from the rigorous asceticism she inherited from her namesake, the great Spanish reformer.

### **2. Lack of a Rigorous Method of Meditation**

Petitot asserts that in all of Thérèse's writings one finds "aucune page, aucun témoignage qui fasse seulement allusion à une méthode d'oraison."<sup>245</sup> For him, this is another negative characteristic of her work, and, I would add, novel. He briefly explains methods of meditation and contemplation practiced by Ignatius of Loyola and Francis de Sales, his point being that Thérèse used none of them.

For Thérèse, "oraison" began at the age of eight or earlier, and was actually closer to contemplation than meditation. She would frequently go off by herself to simply think about God, calling this "réelle oraison." Petitot goes so far as to suggest that a supernatural event took place, since Thérèse wished for Jesus to always be in her, as Mary carried Jesus in her womb, through the sacrament of the Eucharist. He writes that her perfection was great: "...Jésus et son Père avec l'Esprit demeuraient

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<sup>242</sup> Petitot, 16.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>244</sup> *Procès Apostolique*, 43.

<sup>245</sup> Petitot, 60.



réellement en elle.”<sup>246</sup> According to Thérèse, the presence of God never left her because of her love for Him.

Other important themes are also addressed in this section on asceticism. Petitot focuses on Isaiah 53, suggesting the whole foundation of Thérèse’s spiritual way was based on this passage. It has already been demonstrated that her use of scripture here was rather narrow. Petitot points to the roots of this devotion in the legend of Veronica. In my opinion, the tradition of devotion to the Holy Face was not innovative for either Thérèse or Petitot; however, the idea of constant spiritual communion with God was. Petitot developed this idea by emphasising daily celebration of the Eucharist and was right in noting that Thérèse greatly desired to take communion every day, a theme of significant controversy at that time.

The image of internalising Christ through the Eucharist that Thérèse developed would be offensive to many Protestants. However, if one can move past that part of the analogy, one can see Thérèse’s emphasis on personal and experiential relationship, which was quite ground-breaking.

Petitot connected several issues, such as daily celebration of the Eucharist, the Holy Face, contemplation, and the teaching of Jesus, to demonstrate that Thérèse enjoyed ongoing communion with God. The path he takes is not always certain or original, but he does come to a solid conclusion: Thérèse’s continual fellowship with God. She was revolutionary in presenting this idea to her generation; her emphasis on personal contemplation of Jesus/God was revolutionary and prepared the way for the experiential move that would sweep over the Church in the twentieth century.

### **3. Absence of Frequent Extraordinary Supernatural Graces**

Petitot begins chapter three by reciting some of the amazing mystical experiences of Catherine of Sienna: ecstasies, healings, vision, and the list goes on and on. He suggests that there was not a single miracle during Thérèse’s lifetime, a huge departure from the traditional Catholic saint, according to him. There were, however, several miraculous events that he highlights. First, there was the vision of Thérèse’s father’s impending illness when she was only seven; then, the well-known vision of the Virgin Mary at the healing of her childhood illness. Third, he notes her conversion at the age of 13, along with recovery of her emotional stability, followed by the conversion of Pranzini. Fifth was the snow at her taking the habit in 1889. Petitot also notes the mystical experiences that Thérèse enjoyed during her times of contemplation, called “*vols d’esprit*,” after the name given them by Teresa of Avila, implying a supernatural unity with God. One final supernatural sign was her prophetic predictions concerning the

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<sup>246</sup> Petitot, 88.

success of her work that would occur following her death. She told her sisters that they were taking care of a little “saint” and should save everything that belonged to her, even the lashes that fell from her eyelids.

Petitot agrees that Thérèse had supernatural wisdom,<sup>247</sup> pointing out that at 20 she was given the responsibility of training the novices, which, he notes, would have required a great amount of wisdom. He compares Thérèse to Joan of Arc, saying that they were both empowered and directed by gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is supported by the fact that Thérèse studied the gifts of the Holy Spirit just prior to her confirmation in June 1884, a significant date in her memory.

One can see in both Petitot’s and Piat’s writing an emphasis on the gift of prophecy. Is it possible that the use of spiritual gifts in the Pentecostal movement had begun to impact both of these men, starting with Petitot as early as 1925? This is rather unlikely, as any Pentecostal books would have been considered off-limits until Vatican II, but the correlation in time gives cause for speculation.

Petitot, although recognising several events throughout her life, prefers to focus on the fact that these were isolated events that did not correlate with the tradition of the great saints of the past. He parrots Thérèse’s teaching, diminishing the importance of supernatural gifts. However, in contrast to his stated goal, he spends a great deal of time rehearsing all of the extraordinary events that took place in her life, perhaps secretly desiring to show her miraculous works in order to prove her sanctity using the standards of prior centuries.

#### **4. Contemplative versus Active life**

According to Petitot, Thérèse, the most admired saint of the twentieth century (in 1925), chose a contemplative life rather than an active one. Her goal in entering the convent was to “save souls.” Her writing indicates that she felt that by mortification and self-sacrifice at Carmel she could accomplish just that. Petitot suggests that her perfection and her one, single book accomplished more than most people who live an active life.

At the end of chapter four, however, Petitot begins to move away from a purely contemplative stance, writing about the need for a combination of action and prayer, works and meditation. He makes a personal application that those who work zealously must take time to pray and meditate, and breaks with Thérèse in saying that contemplation and prayer are not enough; one must balance these two with

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<sup>247</sup> In French, “*prudence*.”



redemptive activity. Petitot's blending of contemplation and activity was a popular and innovative theme that would grow in the twentieth century, unlike his teaching of Thérèse's doctrine.

### **C. STÉPHANE-JOSEPH PIAT – 1953**

Even though published more than 25 years after the other two works mentioned above, Piat's book on the life of Thérèse's cousin Marie Guérin was not original. In fact, in many ways it seems to retreat in time, most likely due to its biographic nature.

#### **1. Chapter 3**

Marie Guérin entered the convent in August of 1895, and was trained under Thérèse as a novice for a little more than a year. Thérèse's method of mentoring was through the use of daily teaching examples that would come in the course of a day. It was punctual, but not systematic. Several common themes of the "little way" can be seen in this chapter: save souls, be humble, be holy, and accumulate merit. Only through the use of the *chapelet*, that is, by counting failures, can one overcome one's weaknesses. In doing things correctly, one can save a soul. It is important to note that Thérèse was still emphasising the need to count acts of virtue

The Catholic Church has a longstanding tradition of counting acts of righteousness and contrition. The counting of acts of penance goes back to Pachomius in the early monastic period. Later, around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, self-flagellation was accepted as penitential in the religious traditions. Counting acts of righteousness such as prayers is connected to the rosary, popularised in the fifteenth century and closely associated with the Dominicans.

There are indications that counting began to fade in Thérésian doctrine as she became more committed to the idea of love. None of the three authors examined in this section, however, emphasise this change in Thérèse's attitude. Quite the opposite, they each tend to stress her counting as a means of sanctity.

#### **2. Chapter 4**

First, in this chapter about her final months, Thérèse is depicted as already being perfected and prepared to go straight to heaven. Piat's second goal is to paint Thérèse as a martyr. He then attempts to validate her work at Carmel for all those who followed in her "little way". None of these ideas were new or innovative.

### 3. Chapter 5

The last chapter of the book works to portray Thérèse as alive in heaven yet active on earth. She is felt and experienced as dynamic in the lives of those who pray to her. Love is aptly presented as her primary teaching: “Ma grand résolution de chaque jour, c’est d’essayer de tout faire par amour pour le Bon Dieu.”<sup>248</sup> Now, instead of using the rosary to count mistakes, it is used to count the number of times Marie says to Jesus that she loves him, but counting in any fashion does not work well in the twenty-first century. This chapter also emphasises the importance of frequent communion, since it is “la source première de la sainteté,”<sup>249</sup> according to Marie. This follows Thérèse’s teaching, but is not really innovative. Ultimately, Marie triumphed in the “little way”, according to Piat.

#### D. THE THREE AUTHORS COMPARED

Martin and Piat regress in their summary of the “little way”, and Martin, who attempted to explain the virtues of the “little way”, was caught in his own fear of purgatory. Rather than becoming the door to freedom, Thérèse’s prayer of sacrifice is viewed as a desperate means to escape purgatory. The theological limitations of the Church hindered Martin from seeing her truly innovative ideas. Even at the late date of Piat’s book, he was forced by its biographical nature and the agenda of either the Guérin family or himself to preserve and develop the sanctity of Thérèse. She is portrayed as a saint and her teaching highlighted as a way of holiness. Unfortunately, Piat ignored the truly innovative ideas of Thérèse. Only Petitot underscored true change in the manner he viewed holiness, and attempted to explain the changes in Thérèse’s life and ministry, correctly declaring Thérèse’s rejection of traditional asceticism and meditation. While he was accurate in suggesting that her teaching rejected the issue of supernatural graces, he could not escape the traditionalist view that the supernatural was critical to validating a saint.

#### CONCLUSION

The critical questions are as follows: Was the evidence presented for some or all virtues (or acts of piety) culturally or theologically influenced? Was there a particular theological slant or cultural bias that anticipated certain standard answers in the Trials for beatification? The answer to these questions is an unequivocal “yes.” The cultural and theological setting of the early twentieth century deeply affected one’s perception of holiness or sanctity; stereotypical attitudes of the day were demonstrated at length in the Ordinary Process, and even more so in the Apostolic Process. The obvious focal point was the

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<sup>248</sup> Thérèse, Cited by Piat, *Marie Guérin*, 103.

<sup>249</sup> Piat, *Marie Guérin*, 107.



emphasis on virtues, so evident that it hardly needs mentioning as a clear limitation to one's perception of personal holiness. Another point of cultural bias was the subject of monastic life. During the time of Thérèse, it was assumed that for one to be holy he or she had to follow the path of religious vows. Thérèse, personally, her sisters and family, as well as the setting of the Carmel of Lisieux, were all profoundly impacted by the cultural and theological ideas of their peers. In addition, the three writers mentioned were greatly affected by the culture. Martin was unable to remove himself from nineteenth-century assumptions, although he tried. Piat was frozen in family concerns about the perceived holiness of their beloved relative. Only Petitot was able to break free from cultural views of the early twentieth century to see some of the innovative ideas which Thérèse declared. All three authors expressed the values of their day, as seen in an emphasis on obedience and outward actions, as well as on mortification. The monastic life was central to a life of holiness and most of the theological influences bore a deep cultural imprint.

## SECTION 4 - MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

### INTRODUCTION

The manuscripts of *Histoire d'une Ame* have been a source of controversy for more than a century. While author Ida Görres states that Thérèse's writings were modified with great freedom, she nonetheless concludes:

The stylistic corrections are extremely numerous, but do not affect the content... The deletions and insertions, however, have virtually nothing to do with Thérèse's message and doctrine; they serve, it seems to us, solely to stylize her portrait along the lines of the conventional ideal saint of the period and of the sisters themselves... Thus, the seven thousand corrections are, ultimately, without significance... In this respect, the mountain of critical research has brought forth a mouse.<sup>250</sup>

My first response is incredulity at Ida Görres' seeming attempt to gloss over an enormously complex matter. With regard to revisions, more than one writer has mentioned the number 7,000! This number put into perspective averages out to some 14 modifications per page in a 460-page work<sup>251</sup>. Whether considered as 7,000 revisions overall or 14 per page, it merits thorough examination.

With this in mind, my objective is as follows: (i.) to briefly examine the process the original manuscripts underwent to bring them to press; (ii.) to evaluate whether the changes made affected the overall tone of the book; (iii.) to examine the critique that Thérèse's sisters were co-conspirators to keep secret these changes; and (iv.) to briefly evaluate the work in the Critical Edition of the *Manuscripts Autobiographic* completed in 1992.<sup>252</sup>

### A. PROCESS OF EDITING PRIOR TO PRINTING

#### 1. The Basic Facts

Mother Agnès de Jésus, Pauline Martin,<sup>253</sup> who was serving as Reverend Mother, asked Thérèse to put in writing some of the memories of her life. Thérèse fulfilled this request and delivered the manuscript known as Manuscript A, as required, on the day of Pauline's "jour de fête," January 20, 1896.

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<sup>250</sup> Ida Friederike Görres. *The Hidden Face*, 18,20.

<sup>251</sup> The original version (1898) of *Histoire d'une Ame* comprised over four hundred sixty pages. I have made the assumption here that the seven thousand corrections refer to the entire document. If, however, they refer only to what is now known as the Manuscripts Autobiographic, it would only be about two hundred fifty pages in length, and the number of corrections would increase to approximately twenty-eight per page.

<sup>252</sup> *Nouvelle Edition du Centenaire, Edition Critique des Œuvres Completes (Textes et Dernières Paroles) De Sainte Thérèse De L'Enfant-Jesus et de la Sainte-Face, Manuscrits autobiographiques* (Paris: Les Editions Desclée De Brouwer et les Edition du Cerf, 1992). From this point forward in this work, the words "Edition Critique" will be used to refer to this work. The entire multivolume set will be referred to by the acronym NEC.

<sup>253</sup> Pauline Martin is Thérèse's closest sister, the first to enter the Carmel convent, as well as the most influential person in Thérèse's life following the death of her mother.



The second manuscript (B) was written as a letter to Marie Martin,<sup>254</sup> known as Marie du Sacré-Cœur, explaining some of the ideas that Thérèse had shared with the sisters at Carmel regarding the way of “love,” dating between September 13 and 16, 1896. The third manuscript (C) was written in obedience to Mother Marie de Gonzague concerning the “little way” of Thérèse, in June and July of 1897, only a few months before Thérèse’s death that September.

Although this information is well known and widely accepted, it was hidden for some time, especially as concerns the writing of Manuscript B. More will be said about this later on. Another key factor relates to Manuscript C, which was written close to the time of Thérèse’s death and expressly for the event of her “*nécrologique*” or obituary. Some of her poetic works and plays were included in the original version, but are no longer printed with the autobiography.

As Thérèse’s death approached, it is evident from the testimony in her Ordinary Process (1910), as well as the recorded words in *Derniers Entretiens*, that she began to see the printing of her death publication (obituary) as having great importance. It is also certain that Thérèse gave her sister Pauline complete sovereignty in the editing of her manuscripts: “Ma Mère, tout ce que vous trouvez bon de retrancher ou d’ajouter au cahier de ma vie, c’est moi qui le retranche ou qui l’ajoute. Rappelez-vous cela plus tard, et n’ayez aucun scrupule à ce sujet.”<sup>255</sup> The extent and purpose of Mother Agnès’ revisions should be examined, but that Thérèse gave her permission to do so is beyond question.

## 2. Going to Print

During the Ordinary Process, Mother Agnès was asked about the changes to the manuscripts. Her reply on August 17, 1910, revealed that they had come in three basic groups: 1. The removal of short passages relating to intimate family details; 2. The removal of information specific to the convent of Carmel that would not have been understood by those outside; and 3. The requirement by Mother Marie de Gonzague that all of the manuscripts be made to appear as if they were written to her. Such revisions were to provide a unity to the whole and to exclude criticism within the community from those who would have objected to the manuscripts written to Thérèse’s sisters had they known.<sup>256</sup>

This subterfuge by the Reverend Mother surely motivated her desire to destroy the original manuscripts at a later date. Fortunately, the Martin sisters were able to appease her with some minor modifications to the originals, thereby saving them from destruction.

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<sup>254</sup> Marie Martin is Thérèse’s oldest sister.

<sup>255</sup> *Procès informatif ordinaire*, 147.

<sup>256</sup> These facts are quoted in the *Introduction Générale* to the *Edition Critique*, p. 21.

### 3. The Text is Rewritten

Father François de Sainte-Marie was the first person to publicly expose the quantity of changes made in the published editions. In 1956, he published a photocopy version of the original manuscripts, which allowed the scholarly world its first opportunity to examine them firsthand. In his comparison of the original manuscripts to the printed version, he alleged that Mother Agnès had virtually rewritten the entire text: “Elle a pratiquement récrit l’autobiographie afin de la présenter sous une forme classique qui pût agréer au public de l’époque.”<sup>257</sup> The defence given was that the writing style needed to be made to fit the accepted classical style of that epoch.

Father Joseph Baudry provided a thorough explanation of the process prior to printing in the work he edited, *Thérèse et Ses Théologiens*. He examined the letters exchanged between the major parties, and went so far as to call the work a biography. Considering the liberty given to Mother Agnès and the rephrasing required by Mother Marie de Gonzague, his conclusion is not unreasonable. Further, Baudry asserted that the writing of a death publication was always the work of another sister and, therefore, out of one’s control, even more so following one’s death.<sup>258</sup>

### 4. Fitting the Book to the Local Setting

With regard to some of the revisions, the Critical Edition quotes Father François: “En une époque où l’on attachait une telle importance à la parfaite correction du style et au respect scrupuleux des conventions littéraires,”<sup>259</sup> that is, one would expect the stylistic changes made by Mother Agnès. He goes on to say that she had corrected Thérèse’s writings during her life and that it was simply a normal response: “Mère Agnès...a corrigé ces pages comme elle corrigeait aux Buissonnets<sup>260</sup> les compositions hésitantes de la petite Thérèse.”<sup>261</sup> Pauline had finished her education whereas Thérèse had not.

Following the first rewrite by Mother Agnès, the text was sent to Father Godefroy Madelaine, a friend of the ecclesiastical head of the convent at Carmel, who was given the charge of correcting the text. Eventually, his work would be significant in securing approval for publication, but this goal was not directly stated in correspondence between them. In examining an existing page of his corrections (no longer in print), Father Baudry concluded that his influence was minimal: four minor corrections in nine

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<sup>257</sup> François de Sainte-Marie. *Manuscrits Autobiographiques de Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus*. (Lisieux: Carmel de Lisieux, 1957), XIV.

<sup>258</sup> Joseph Baudry, Ed. *Thérèse et Ses Théologiens*. (Versailles, France: Editions Saint-Paul, 1998) 21.

<sup>259</sup> *Edition Critique*, 23.

<sup>260</sup> This is the name of the home where Thérèse grew up following her mother’s death. It was a term of endearment not a geographic location.

<sup>261</sup> *Edition Critique*, 23.





lines. While a very small sample and possibly not sufficient to justify Baudry's conclusions, there remains no other evidence to evaluate.

## **5. Manuscript B**

Examples of the revisions made will be provided later; however, the most notable editorial change was the placement of the letter to Marie (Manuscript B) at the end of the book, as though it were part of the material written to Mother Marie de Gonzague (Manuscript C). Father François justified this change by suggesting that Manuscript C flowed logically after Manuscript A, but the Letter to Marie (Manuscript B), even if chronologically written between the other two manuscripts, logically fit better at the end. Although this may be the rationale for placing the Manuscript B at the end, it does not explain concealing its origin for so many decades.

This format of the book, with Manuscript B at the conclusion of the work, continued up to the efforts of Father François in 1956. Regardless of the original intention, Manuscript B is corrected in the most recent Critical Edition. Hence, the popular response to the book, the shower of roses, and the process of beatification and canonisation occurred during the time of the flawed copy of the book. While simply moving Manuscript B to the end of the book does not negate the value of the writing, one should bear in mind the potential significance of such a modification.

## **6. Correcting the Changes**

Near the time of the Ordinary Process, Marie Martin went back through the manuscripts endeavouring to correct the previously made revisions. Many times, for example, a revision was something as simple as the substitution of a name. By this time, Mother Marie de Gonzague had died, thus the deception she had required was no longer relevant. The corrections were not, however, perfect, as Father François notes: "La correctrice a cependant, au cours de son travail, commis quelques oublis. Elle n'a pas non plus toujours pensé à rétablir certain dates, modifiées au moment de l'attribution des manuscrits à Mère Marie de Gonzague..."<sup>262</sup> Although Marie Martin tried to undo many of the previous modifications, she was either unable to make or recall all of them.

## **7. Chapter XII and Appendices**

While not considered to be part of the three key manuscripts, there was another chapter at the end of *Histoire D'Une Ame*, along with many appendices. Chapter XII encompassed pages 215 to 254, and

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<sup>262</sup> François de Sainte-Marie, XVIII.

contained some testimonies of various Carmelites, portions of *Derniers Entretiens*,<sup>263</sup> as well as some other minor items. The appendices added more than 200 pages and included Thérèse's prayer of sacrifice to merciful love, 18 letters to Céline, 39 poems, and some of her plays.<sup>264</sup>

## 8. Printing to Canonisation

*Histoire d'une Ame* was originally published at the first anniversary of Thérèse's death on September 30, 1898. Two thousand copies were printed and distributed in the normal fashion of Carmel, although there was nothing normal about the size of the publication. This was the first time that a book of 469 pages, rather than a brief pamphlet, was published at the death of a Carmelite nun: "Jamais auparavant une carmélite de Lisieux n'avait rédigé, à plus forte raison publié, son 'autobiographie' ou 'ses mémoires.'"<sup>265</sup> Requests poured in and it was quickly sold out. On May 24, 1899, a second printing of 6,000 copies was approved. It was then translated into English in 1901, and several other languages between 1902 and 1905. Miracles, visions and healings continued and multiplied around the world, all accredited to Thérèse. By 1907, there were indications from Pope Pius X that he desired to see her beatified. Much more could be said about this period of time, the shower of roses (the outpouring of miracles, as it is called); however, the focus here is the affect of the manuscripts and their fidelity to the originals.

## B. DID THE CHANGES AFFECT THE OUTCOME?

### 1. Documents

It should be noted which versions of *Histoire d'une Ame* were available for this research. The most important is the Critical Edition, published in 1992. The Critical Edition is based on the original manuscripts and, although recently published, is often referred to in this work as though it were the original manuscripts. Second is the work of François de Sainte-Marie, published in 1957, the printed version made from the photocopy version published in 1956. Also available was an original copy of *Histoire d'une Ame* published after 1926.<sup>266</sup> Comparison was made with this version, as well as the

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<sup>263</sup> *Derniers Entretiens* is the book that contains all of Thérèse's final comments. It has also been published along with the Manuscripts Autobiographic in the multi-volume set, *Nouvelle Edition du Centenaire*.

<sup>264</sup> *Sainte Thérèse de L'Enfant-Jésus et de la Sainte-Face. Nouvelle Edition du Centenaire, Edition Critique des Œuvres Complètes (Textes et Dernières Paroles) De Sainte Thérèse De L'Enfant-Jesus et de la Sainte-Face La Première « Histoire D'Une Ame » de 1898, Texte Intégral des Onze Premiers Chapitres. (Paris: Les Editions Desclée De Brouwer et les Editions du Cerf, 1992), 204. (Here after referred to as: *Histoire D'Une Ame*, NEC, 1898)*

<sup>265</sup> Baudry, 20.

<sup>266</sup> The exact date of publication is not indicated. It was after her canonisation in 1925 because the pronouncement of the Pope at this event is printed in the book.



1898<sup>267</sup> version printed with the Critical Edition. One other early version was also available, the Conformed Manuscript, given to the authorities in Rome at the Ordinary Process in 1911.<sup>268</sup> Finally, all of Thérèse's works were recently published in 2004, in a volume entitled *Œuvres Complètes*, which follows the Critical Edition of 1992 with the exception of significantly fewer footnotes.

## 2. The 1911 Manuscript

Despite comments that the published version (1898) was faithful to the original, I have concluded that the 1911 version, supplied to the Trial, is appreciably different from the published version and is very similar to the Critical Edition of 1992, with very minor grammatical and word revisions. When there is a conflict between the 1911 version and the Critical Edition, the 1911 version usually resembles the 1898 version. This fact would be worthy of a study in itself. Also, it would be a fair assumption that Mother Agnès did not have available to her the critical tools that were available at the end of the twentieth century.

## 3. 1926 Version

The version published after Thérèse's canonisation, herein called the 1926 version, is a bizarre combination of information from the original manuscripts and the 1898 version. The deception concerning the three manuscripts has been eliminated; Manuscript B is mentioned both in the preface and as a footnote at the beginning of the section as a letter written to Thérèse's eldest sister Marie. The recipient of Manuscript A is noted as Mother Agnès.

Some large sections of the original manuscripts have been inserted into the published version, such as at least two pages at the beginning of Manuscript B. However, chronologically, Manuscript B is still out of place, as it is still located at the end of the book. In most instances, the 1926 version follows the 1898 version, including the insertions from Mother Agnès that are not in any way part of the original manuscripts. Most minor editorial changes from the 1898 version were also carried over into the 1926 version.

The 1926 version is, however, misleading in its own way. For example, a section inserted into the text by Mother Agnès states: "Cependant, ma sœur chérie, puisque vous me témoignez le désir de

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<sup>267</sup> An original copy of the 1898 text was not available. When the 1898 version is referred to in this chapter, it is referencing the reproduction made of this first printing in the *Edition Critique*. This version shows sections that were inserted, as well as notations for material that was deleted. More will be said concerning this later on.

<sup>268</sup> *Procès informatif ordinaire*, 599-720.

connaître à fond...tous les sentiments de mon cœur...”<sup>269</sup> In this phrase, the editor replaced the words “ma Mère vénérée”<sup>270</sup> in the original version (1898) with “ma Sœur Chérie.” The change is reasonable, since the manuscript is noted as having been sent to Thérèse’s sister. Rather than removing the inserted passage, the name was changed to match the current state of information given to the general public.

#### **4. Key Question**

To what extent did the changes made in the original manuscripts affect the outcome of the book? This is a very difficult question, since one can only surmise how the public would have responded had the original manuscript been published rather than the edited version. While it is outside the scope of this study to examine the majority of editorial changes, it is nonetheless critical to note the number and enormity of revisions made.

In comparing some passages of the original book (1898) to the Critical Edition (1992), I focused on the key passages. In general, I would conclude that Manuscripts B and C received fewer changes than A. Still, an average of 14 corrections per page is sure to make a difference in one’s reading and comprehension of the information provided.

#### **5. Stylistic Changes**

At the outset, it can be said that stylistic changes occurred: changes in words, punctuation, word order, and phraseology that any experienced writer might make when proofing a document. Typically, when this occurs, the meaning is not altered, but the outcome is easier to read or more suited to the reading audience of that period. Mother Agnès consistently made such changes throughout the documents. I have selected a sample from page two and printed both versions as follows:

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<sup>269</sup> Sainte Thérèse de L’Enfant-Jésus. *Histoire D’Une Ame, Ecrite Par Elle-Même*. (Bar-Le-Duc, France: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, about 1926), 251.

<sup>270</sup> *Histoire D’Une Ame*, NEC, 1898, 193.



(1992)

...je m'étonnais [1]en Le voyant prodiguer des faveurs extraordinaires [2]aux Saints qui l'avaient [2v<sup>o</sup>]<sup>271</sup> offensé, comme St Paul, St Augustin [3]et qu'il forçait pour ainsi dire à recevoir ses grâces [4]ou bien en lisant la vie de Saints [5]que Notre Seigneur [6]s'est plu à caresser du berceau à la tombe, [7]san laisser sur leur passage aucun obstacle qui les empêchât de s'élever vers lui [8]et prévenant ces âmes de telles faveurs qu'elles ne pouvaient ternir l'éclat immaculé de leur robe baptismale, ...<sup>272</sup>

(1898)

Je m'étonnais [1]de le voir prodiguer des faveurs extraordinaires [2]à de grands pécheurs, comme saint Paul, saint Augustin, [3][+++]sainte Madeleine [+++]<sup>273</sup>, et tant d'autres, qu'il forçait, pour ainsi dire, à recevoir ses grâces. [4]Je m'étonnais encore, en lisant la vie des saints, [5]de voir Notre-Seigneur [6] caresser du berceau à la tombe [7]certaines âmes privilégiées, sans laisser sur leur passage aucun obstacle qui les empêchât de s'élever ver lui, [8]ne permettant jamais au péché de ternir l'éclat immaculé de leur robe batismale.<sup>274</sup>

Some of the above changes<sup>275</sup> are simply stylistic, but not all. For instance, revision [1] is a perfect example of a stylistic enhancement. The second [2], however, modifies the content from "saints" to "sinners." The third change [3] adds Sainte Madeleine along with "many others." While this does not greatly influence the meaning of the paragraph, it is still an insertion of text, something that Mother Agnès was not afraid to do. Also important in the third change [3] is that the second phrase is not noted as an insertion by the Critical Edition, when in fact it is. The fourth change [4] inserts the words, "Je m'étonnais encore" in place of "ou bien," adding astonishment to the idea in the original text. Revision [5] is mostly stylistic. In revision [6], words are deleted from the original; the idea of pleasure is removed. Change [7] is an insertion of text that states those who are cared for by the Lord are "certain privileged souls." It is possible that the idea of this phrase is implied from the context but not stated. More importantly, the insertion is not noted in the 1898 version. The last revision [8] is significant; the idea is the same, one is kept from tarnishing one's baptismal robe, but the 1898 version seems to be stated in stronger terms by use of the words "sin will never be permitted to tarnish" one's baptismal robe.

In my opinion, the above revisions, as an example, exceed the stylistic and begin to affect the meaning with subtle or not-so-subtle nuances. Even more important are two insertions in the 1898 version not noted as such. In the 1898 version, it is stated that the insertions noted by [+++]<sup>276</sup> are from Mother Agnès, so it is possible that these two changes were from another source. The fact that they are not noted

<sup>271</sup> This is the notation given in the *Edition Critique* to mark the pages of the original manuscript. This would be page two *recto*, meaning the front side of page 2. The "v" notation means *verso*, the reverse side of the page.

<sup>272</sup> *Histoire D'Une Ame, Edition Critique*, 1992.

<sup>273</sup> The [+++] is the symbol used in the *Edition Critique* of 1898 to indicate words that were inserted (not being in the original manuscripts). The assumption here is that Mother Agnès made most of these.

<sup>274</sup> *Histoire D'Une Ame, NEC*, 1898, 32.

<sup>275</sup> I have only noted changes in the text. Punctuation changes and capitalizations have not been noted, although these changes can also alter the meaning.

implies there were no changes, which leads the reader to believe it is part of the original when it is not.

More will be said about this later on.

## **6. Editing Changes Due to the Demands of Mother Marie de Gonzague**

There are numerous examples in the text of name changes. Obvious references addressing the writings to Thérèse's sisters have been modified so that the reader will assume that the reference is to Mother Marie de Gonzague. All of Manuscripts A and B necessitated this change at the demand of the Reverend Mother.

## **7. Editing Changes Needed to Protect the Privacy of the Martin Family**

Certain events in the manuscripts were removed because, at the time, it would have been considered indiscreet to include them.

## **8. Additions that Appear to have come from Mother Agnès' Memory or Other Documents**

Occasionally, Mother Agnès filled in some of the details of a story. Other times she went beyond recounting the story, adding quotes from a source or providing details. This is especially true for events related to Thérèse's childhood, for obvious reasons. An example of this is a delightful anecdote about Thérèse, who one day called to her mother as she climbed the stairs, repeating the word "Mama" with each step and awaiting a response. This story is noted as an addition to the text in the 1898 version.

## **9. Editing Changes to Make a Point**

### **i. Deletions**

There were most definitely revisions done with the purpose of making a point. One such example concerns Thérèse's childhood. During the Ordinary Process by Mother Agnès, Pauline was asked if Thérèse was spoiled, and replied: "Pas du tout; d'ailleurs, notre père l'aimait, mais ne la gâtait pas..."<sup>277</sup> To prove her point, she then related an incident of Mr. Martin reprimanding Thérèse for being disrespectful. Apparently, the same question was asked of Marie at the same Trial, who responded: "Il est bien vrai que notre père aimait spécialement notre petite sœur, mais il ne la gâtait pas pour cela."<sup>278</sup> While Céline may have used different words, it supported the same argument, that Thérèse was not spoiled: "Thérèse, de son côté, ne se prévalait point de cette affection spéciale."<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> *Histoire D'Une Ame*, NEC, 1898, 9.

<sup>277</sup> *Procès informatif ordinaire*, 136. Cited by Christopher O'Mahony, 23.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid*, 239.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid*, 265.



Page after page, as well as individual paragraphs, were deleted from the original manuscript for the printing of the 1898 edition. All of [7v<sup>o</sup>] and most of [8r<sup>o</sup>] were removed. In these sections, Thérèse, to her credit, tried to communicate her strong-willed nature as a child, citing a letter her mother wrote: “Je suis obligé de corriger ce pauvre bébé qui se met dans des furies épouvantable quand les choses ne vont pas à son idée, elle se roule par terre comme une désespérée croyant que tout est perdu; il y a des moments où c’est plus fort qu’elle, elle en est suffoquée. C’est une enfant bien nerveuse...”<sup>280</sup> The letter goes on to tell about how sweet Thérèse is and, by her mother’s acknowledgment, she does say she corrected the child. Yet, there is something quite out of line for a child that has a temper tantrum, rolling around on the ground to the point of suffocation. This text was removed from the 1898 version because, in my opinion, it showed Thérèse to have been quite spoiled and out of control as a small child. Were there other such illustrations?

Later one reads that every afternoon Thérèse went for a walk with her father, where they would visit a different church. One phrase was edited from this story: “...pendant laquelle papa m’achetait toujours un petit cadeau d’un ou deux sous.”<sup>281</sup> It appears that she was a somewhat indulged little girl who spent every afternoon with her adoring father. While this is certainly not a sin, it is apparent that the sisters made editorial changes to diminish the idea of Thérèse having been the recipient of too much attention.

One example of editing the text to fit the testimony had to do with Thérèse’s call to Carmel. During the aforementioned testimony, Mother Agnès was asked if Thérèse’s calling was influenced by something other than her own decision, to which she responded: “Craignant moi-même qu’elle ne parlât du Carmel à cause de moi, je lui demandai un jour si ce n’était pas pour être avec moi qu’elle exprimait ces désires. Elle fut peinée de cette supposition et me dit : ‘Oh ! non, c’est pour le bon Dieu tout seul.’”<sup>282</sup>

The truth, however, is found in the information deleted from the original manuscripts. The first time Thérèse learned that Pauline was leaving home and entering Carmel, it struck a blow. She communicated her disappointment, most of which is recorded in the 1898 version, but the following line was omitted: “J’allais perdre ma seconde Mère!...”<sup>283</sup> While Pauline’s imminent departure was stated, the special relationship they shared was intentionally removed.

Soon thereafter Pauline explained to Thérèse the life at Carmel. The day after, Thérèse communicated her desire to enter Carmel. The problem is that this entire section was removed from the

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<sup>280</sup> *Edition Critique*, 48.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>282</sup> *Procès informatif ordinaire*, 138.

1898 version so that it reads as follows: “Le lendemain je confiai mon secret à Pauline qui regardant mes désirs comme la volonté du Ciel, me dit que bientôt j’irais avec elle voir la Mère Prieure du Carmel...”<sup>284</sup>

Days after hearing that her sister was going to Carmel, she suddenly received the same call. She then, at the age of nine, went for a meeting with the Reverend Mother to express her desire to join the convent, where she was disappointed to learn that she could not do so until she was 16 years old. Again, this section was removed from the 1898 version, including the statement: “Je me résignai malgré mon vif désir d’entrer le plus tôt possible et de faire ma 1<sup>re</sup> Communion le jour de la prise d’Habit de Pauline.”<sup>285</sup> In her childish way, Thérèse wanted to join the convent and have her First Communion the day that Pauline took the veil. Obviously, it could not happen, but this does not change the fact that her desire to go to Carmel was intimately connected to the separation from her sister. Following the meeting with the Reverend Mother, she tried to convince herself that she was doing it for God alone, but her own words make it apparent that this was not the case.

## ii. Additions

Not only was material removed, but there were also numerous insertions. Most of these are well marked by the [+++], as can be seen in the quote below. As mentioned before, Thérèse and her father visited churches on their afternoon walks. This was how she first came to know Carmel, from visiting the little chapel there. The original text notes: “...papa me montra la grille du chœur, me disant que derrière étaient des religieuses. J’étais bien loin de me douter que neuf ans plus tard je serais parmi elles !...”<sup>286</sup>

The following is the same event in the 1898 edition, with the changes underlined:

« Vois-tu, ma petite reine, me dit papa, derrière cette grande grille, il y a de saintes religieuses qui prient toujours le bon Dieu » J’étais bien loin de penser que, neuf ans plus tard, je serais parmi elles ; [+++] que là, dans ce Carmel béni, je recevrais de si grandes grâces ! [+++]<sup>287</sup>

Mother Agnès made an obvious attempt to reflect the most positive attitude possible towards Carmel, a perfect illustration of the type of shift in meaning done by her hand. It should also be noted that two of the additions are not noted in the 1898 version, in the same way as the third one, not to mention the complete rewriting of the first phrase. Only a careful comparison of the two texts would highlight these unmarked additions.

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<sup>283</sup> *Edition Critique*, 85.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

<sup>285</sup> *Edition Critique*, 87.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>287</sup> *Histoire D’Une Ame*, NEC, 1898, 48-49.



One of the more famous stories about Thérèse is the vision she had of the Virgin Mary at the time she was healed of her childhood neurosis. As recorded in the Critical Edition, it reads:

Tout à coup la Sainte Vierge me parut belle, si belle que jamais je n'avais vu rien de si beau, son visage respirait une bonté et une tendresse ineffable, mais ce qui me pénétra jusqu'au fond de l'âme ce fut le « ravissant sourire de la S<sup>te</sup> Vierge ». Alors toutes mes peines s'évanouirent, deux grosses larmes jaillirent de mes paupières et coulèrent silencieusement sur mes joues, mais c'était des larmes d'une joie sans mélange... Ah ! pensai-je, la S<sup>te</sup> Vierge m'a souri, que je suis heureuse...<sup>288</sup>

The 1898 version is, however, significantly improved:

Tout à coup, la statue s'anima ; la Vierge Marie devint belle, si belle, que jamais je ne trouverai d'expression pour rendre cette beauté divine. Son visage respirait une douceur, une bonté, une tendresse ineffables ; mais ce qui me pénétra jusqu'au fond de l'âme, ce fut son ravissant sourire ! Alors toutes mes peines s'évanouirent, deux grosses larmes jaillirent de mes paupières et coulèrent silencieusement...

Ah ! c'étaient des larmes de joie céleste et sans mélange ! [+++] La sainte Vierge s'est avancée vers moi [+++] ! Elle m'a souri... que je suis heureuse !<sup>289</sup>

There are numerous changes, but none as significant as the fact that the statue approached her. In the original manuscripts, the focus was the beautiful smile. In the 1898 version, however, the statue moved and then smiled. The statement about this event is repeated on the next page of the 1898 version and is also an obvious addition.

In the footnotes, the Critical Edition explains this addition as an event recalled later in life. None of the other versions of this story support the statue approaching her. The only additional information is that as a child she saw the statue from a side view, but nothing is said about it having moved. It seems obvious from these few points of investigation that the text was modified to enhance the reader's perception and was not at all stylistic in nature.

#### 10. Was Thérèse's Doctrine Changed?

Concerning the original manuscripts, Father François de Sainte-Marie states that Mother Agnès unquestionably rewrote the documents. He maintains that the doctrine and primary issues are the same at their base, but the form was changed because the temperament of Mother Agnès was different than that of Thérèse. He goes so far as to say: "Ces modifications n'ont certes pas empêché les âmes de rejoindre authentiquement Thérèse et de se pénétrer de sa doctrine."<sup>290</sup> I agree that the major points of Thérèse's doctrine remain mostly unaltered, with an emphasis on the word mostly. Manuscript B was the least modified of the three, but there were changes to the atmosphere and attitude of what was said; for example, in one place emphasising something not present in the original manuscript, or diminishing

<sup>288</sup> *Edition Critique*, 98.

<sup>289</sup> *Histoire D'Une Ame*, NEC, 1898, 68. The underline is mine to highlight certain changes.

something that was present. This is most clearly the case as regards Thérèse's childhood, which if shared openly was, at best, troubled.

## **11. Scientific Evaluation of the Text**

Father François concludes that, from scientific study of the manuscripts, it is impossible to reconcile the two manuscripts with the tools of modern critical methods: "...sur le plan proprement scientifique, il est inutile de chercher à concilier les exigences de la critique moderne avec la manière dont fut retouché le texte original... Sur une synopse où les deux textes figurent en regard et où leurs divergences sont notées, des plus légères aux plus importantes, nous relevons plus de 7,000 variantes."<sup>291</sup>

## **12. Biography**

The problem, however, goes beyond the scientific evaluation of the text. Although the major points are primarily the same, the way in which they are communicated, the information that is withheld and the insertion of information, differs from the original. Combining Father François' critique, stating that the manuscripts are scientifically irreconcilable, with both his and Father Joseph Baudry's analysis concerning the forming of the documents, I must conclude that Mother Agnès created a biography of her sister's life. The sheer number and degree of the revisions make it impossible to call the 1898 version an autobiography.

Some will counter that it was modified to communicate an image that would be accepted as holy during that era, which may be an acceptable explanation for some of the changes. Without doubt the modifications fit Mother Agnès' view of holiness; however, those who suggest that such modifications would not change Thérèse's message are unquestionably mistaken.

## **C. WAS THERE A COVER UP?**

### **1. The Obvious Statement of Conformity**

Mother Agnès testified at the Ordinary Process Tribunal in August and September of 1910, where she was asked if the published edition "...concorde-t-il tout à fait avec l'Autographe de la Servante de Dieu, de sorte qu'on puisse lire l'un pour l'autre avec sécurité?"<sup>292</sup> She replied: "Il y a quelques changements, mais de peu d'importance et qui ne changent pas le sens général et substantiel du récit."<sup>293</sup> She then explained the three types of changes made, as outlined above. The judges ordered that an exact copy of the original manuscripts be made and filed with the rest of the Trial material.

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<sup>290</sup> *Edition Critique*, 23.

<sup>291</sup> François de Sainte-Marie, cited by *Edition Critique*, 23.

<sup>292</sup> *Procès informatif ordinaire*, 149.



In 1912, the Promoteur de la Foi declared that he was in agreement with the quoted testimony, adding that having compared “‘ligne à ligne, l’édition donnée au public’ avec les manuscrits autographes de Thérèse, ait pu dire que ‘les différences apparurent rares et sans portée au point de vue de la vérité historique.’”<sup>294</sup>

## 2. The Evidence Disagrees

While this supports Ida Görres’ assertions, after examining the text and finding pages had been removed or added and key issues changed or distorted to convey a desired point, as previously illustrated, I cannot concur. The 1898 version of the text was not at all faithful to the original manuscripts, distorting facts and altering key information as it pleased the whims of Thérèse’s sisters Pauline (Mother Agnès) and Marie. It is quite apparent to me that her sisters, primarily Mother Agnès, worked diligently to modify the text and hide the original manuscripts from public viewing, regardless of the motivation.

Another important issue as regards obscuring the facts is the destruction of documents. It is well-known that many documents relating to the family were recopied and the originals destroyed: “...il faut bien constater que les sœurs de Thérèse ont pratiqué ainsi pour nombre de documents de famille: établir des copies, revues et corrigées par leurs soins, et détruire ensuite les originaux, pour qu’on fasse plus tard des comparaisons. C’est le cas notamment de la quasi-totalité des lettres de Mme Martin...”<sup>295</sup> Father Piat justified this action, suggesting it was necessary to remove any “foolishness” from the letters, but there is no way for one to know if that is factual. From what I have already seen of the deletion of key phrases and insertion of ideas, it seems dubious that removing foolishness was their sole intention.

Further, the letters sent by Thérèse to Father Pichon, her spiritual director, are no longer in existence. It is possible that these would have provided a goldmine of information, but unfortunately only Father Pichon likely read them. In this particular case, at least, the Martin sisters are innocent of misconduct.

## 3. The Conspiracy Theory

Clearly, the information provided to the authorities in Rome regarding the manuscripts was released in a miserly fashion. The Introduction to the Critical Edition states that the 1907 version that Rome received only acknowledged that the original manuscript had been divided into chapters. I was not able to personally examine that version, but the version supplied in 1911 plainly indicates three separate

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<sup>293</sup> *Procès informatif ordinaire*, 149.

<sup>294</sup> *Histoire D’Une Ame*, NEC, 1898, 8.

<sup>295</sup> *Edition Critique*, 22.

manuscripts, after Marie du Sacré-Cœur had restored the original to the best of her ability. The sisters were evidently reluctant to provide this information to the authorities, thereby suggesting there was a need, or no less than a desire, to keep some details concealed.

In terms of other individuals who may have been party to such a plan, Mgr Lemonnier, the bishop of Lisieux, stated: “Cette modification ne change presque rien du texte imprimé jusqu’ici,”<sup>296</sup> that is, the modifications change almost nothing. Is it truly plausible that 7,000 modifications could change “almost nothing”? His statement hardly seems credible. Yet, even the Tribunal agreed only minor modifications were made, according to the same bishop: “Ce même Tribunal a comparé avec les textes originaux le texte des éditions imprimées, et reconnu que les textes originaux le textes des éditions imprimées, et reconnu que les très légères modification de forme ou les quelques suppressions opérées n’affectaient pas la vérité foncière des textes publiés.”<sup>297</sup>

After personally examining the 1911 version printed in the Ordinary Process, it is obvious that it is more or less identical to the Critical Edition. Some key changes and advances have been made in the Critical Edition, but in contrast to the 1898 version, the 1911 and the Critical Editions are nearly the same, with only minor grammatical and word changes.

What then was the rationale of the Roman authorities to have allowed such a distinctly divergent version to be published as “authentic” for over 50 years? What were the greatest changes to the manuscripts, for example, were they theological? Was it the advances in Vatican II that permitted the truth to be revealed concerning the manuscripts, or was it the somewhat “unholy” life of the little Thérèse that made the original manuscripts unacceptable to the authorities? In my opinion, Vatican II was not a factor as concerns the manuscripts, since the photocopy version was published before the Council. Regrettably, the answers to these and other questions, while worthy of note, fall outside the scope of this work.

There is no question, however, that the Roman authorities for decades permitted the publication of the “non-authentic” version with the knowledge that the accurate version was recorded in the Ordinary Process. Thus, this certainly bears the hallmarks of a conspiracy on some level.

Concerning Thérèse’s sisters, what was their goal in concealing information? Was it because they did not really see their sister as a saint and were trying to make her into one? Not likely. All evidence would indicate that Thérèse’s sisters viewed her as a saint. It seems more reasonable that they feared the public would criticise certain aspects of her life, questioning her holiness, and therefore they removed

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<sup>296</sup> *Edition Critique*, 25.



them and kept them from public view. This again emphasises the importance of culture as it relates to piety. What might have greatly offended someone at the beginning of the twentieth century may be acceptable to someone living 50 or 100 years later.

#### **4. Authorities Demand the Manuscripts**

In 1947, the Director General of the Order of Carmel requested the original manuscripts from Mother Agnès: “Pour réfuter et éviter les interprétations erronées ou incomplètes, pour approfondir progressivement la doctrine de l’âme de la Petite Sainte, les documents et textes qui nous sont fournis si généreusement ne nous suffisent pas.”<sup>298</sup> Almost 50 years after Thérèse’s death, the Church still did not have access to the original documents, and what had been supplied was insufficient. Pressure to produce an authentic version of the original manuscripts was building, thanks in part to the work of the Combes Abbey.

Mother Agnès at the age of 86 succeeded in keeping the original manuscripts under lock and key at the Carmel of Lisieux until her death. Thus, the manuscripts were yielded and published in 1956 by photocopy, and later printed in 1957 by François de Sainte-Marie. One can hardly propose that the idea of a cover-up is implausible. While it is certain that more could be said about the changes to these manuscripts, we will now proceed to the Critical Edition.

### **D. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CRITICAL EDITION?**

#### **1. Gratitude**

A word of recognition is due those who diligently worked for years to develop and expand the Critical Edition to include all of Thérèse’s works. Thousands of hours of scholarly work are represented therein and have produced an integral collection that has removed much of the mystery surrounding the original manuscripts. There are, however, some improvements that could be beneficial.

#### **2. Dubious Words/Phrases**

At the end of his work published in 1957, Father François lists all of the passages still considered dubious: Manuscript A, 132; Manuscript B, 8; Manuscript C, 30, leaving a total of 170 uncertain passages. Most of these contain only one or two words with a single letter or two in question. Some of this was undoubtedly due to the many corrections made in the original manuscripts or due to Thérèse’s writing

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<sup>297</sup> *Edition Critique*, Bishop Lemonnier cited, 25.

<sup>298</sup> Director General of Carmel, cited by *Edition Critique*, 28.

style. One example is “du pain”<sup>299</sup> written in Manuscript A, in comparison to the original “de pain.”<sup>300</sup>

The change is minor and although one is grammatically correct, the variant does not affect the meaning.

In examining several of the variants with the Critical Edition, there was, in my opinion, no clear pattern. Most times, the Critical Edition followed Father François’ version published in 1957, though not always. Often a questionable word was put in brackets in the Critical Edition, indicating that it had been inserted. This is not surprising, as anyone writing a long document can inadvertently leave a word out now and then.

It is, nonetheless, interesting to note the differences between the 1911 version and the Critical Edition (1992). While not every point was compared, it appears that the majority of the questionable words in the 1911 version follow the 1898 version. This would make sense, in that the same people edited both editions.

Still, the overall similarity between the 1911 version and the Critical Edition (1992) implies that Thérèse’s sisters were doing their best to deliver a conformed copy to the authorities. Although it was mandated, it is my belief that the sisters were doing their best to follow the request. In this sense, any divergence from the Critical Edition was probably due to a lack of critical skill on their part, or the result of confusing or illegible manuscripts.

One is at a disadvantage not having the original manuscripts to examine. My assumption is that the Critical Edition was finally able to resolve most or all of the aforementioned inconsistencies using more advanced critical techniques. Without the original manuscript, however, this is but an assumption. Out of 170 dubious phrases, it seems likely that the experts in the Critical Edition could have resolved most of them. Yet, the difficulty in reading the original text because of its poor condition makes it probable that some variations remain. Father François supports this idea: “Le lecteur s’est donc trouvé en possession des éléments du problème critique : d’une part le texte actuel des Manuscrits et d’autre part l’appréciation des experts sur les difficultés de lecture qu’il présente.”<sup>301</sup>

In my view, it would have been helpful when an interpretation was in question to have the Critical Edition explain how and why the variant was chosen. The list of questionable texts may be greater or lesser than the list supplied by Father François; nonetheless, it would have been practical to provide an explanatory note for each critical question.

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<sup>299</sup> François de Sainte-Marie. 1957, 24.

<sup>300</sup> This is the suggested reading from the original manuscripts. However, the *Edition Critique* agrees with the rendering of François at this point. See page 52 of the *Edition Critique*.



### 3. All Insertions of Text Noted

One feature that was very helpful in the 1898 version was the marking of inserted text by [+++], whether simply a few words or a page or more of text. The text that was previously compared from sections 2r° and 2v° provides an interesting example. Eight changes are indicated; two of them, 3 and 7, are insertions. Change 3 is partially noted as an insertion (see above) by the normal notation [+++], but the entire phrase is not included. Change 7 was also an insertion, but is not noted as such.

Obviously, one would conclude that this is not the only example of insertions that were not noted. Indeed, it is difficult for the reader to trust that all of the insertions were noted when this is not the case. Again, it is possible that only the changes by Mother Agnès were highlighted in this special way. Still, it would have been easier for the reader had all of the insertions been noted, regardless of the source.

### 4. Clear Marking of Removed Text

Again, in the 1898 version, any passage that was removed from the Critical Edition is indicated by a line of text, “■ 13v°, 6/10 et 10/12”<sup>302</sup> In this particular example, lines 6-10 and 10-12 were deleted from section 13v°. The removed lines can be located by careful examination of the other volume, but it is a complicated process. Add to this the fact that the mentioning of lines, such as “10-12,” is extremely imprecise. It would have been simpler to put brackets or some other marking around the text in the Critical Edition.

I am sure that this was done for a valid reason; however, is it possible that in some ways the cover-up continues? The key information is in the text, but it is separated from where it should be. The notes regarding what has been removed should be a part of both texts, not just the 1898 version.

Granted, noting the removed texts in the Critical Edition would make it more cumbersome to read. It could also jeopardise the original editors' work, calling into question all of the events related to the book in the first 50 years. That said, what then is the purpose of a Critical Edition? It would have been better to simply indicate with parentheses, brackets or stars the texts that were removed, as the insertions were noted in the 1898 version. One can only surmise as to the reasons for not indicating in the Critical Edition how much text was in fact removed. But in so doing, seekers of truth are at a loss to locate desired information without hours and hours of work. Hence, the amount of effort dedicated to the Critical Edition implies to me that the editors' decision to note the deletions in an unclear manner was, if not deliberate, careless.

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<sup>301</sup> François de Sainte-Marie, XIX.

## 5. Marking the Pages in the 1898 Version

It also would have been useful in the comparing of these two documents had there been an indication of page markings in the 1898 version, as was done in the Critical Edition. Obviously, this would have been extremely difficult because of the enormous amount of revisions and the fact that certain pages are missing altogether. Large sections of the original were shifted to other locations in the 1898 version. However, had all the page beginnings been noted, it would have greatly assisted the reader in the process of comparing the documents. Needless to say, had they made such an effort, it would have also shown how much the documents had been edited. The goal, however, was to bring these changes to light rather than hide them for yet another hundred years.

## 6. Towards a True Critical Edition

The Critical Edition is of inestimable value, providing notes that are at times explanatory, at times devotional, and at times critical. Ordinarily, however, manuscript evidence is precisely marked to underscore an insertion or deletion. Although it would be a sizable undertaking, I would challenge the Central Office of Lisieux to produce a *bona fide* Critical Edition of the *Manuscripts Autobiographic*, comparing and highlighting every single revision and modification of the text. Such a manuscript comparison could be done with parallel versions, as has been done with the Gospels, or with two lines of text, one over the other. By either method, a true study of Thérèse, comparing what was said about her during the first 50 years and in the last 50 years, would be achievable. One can only wonder why a less than thorough work was offered to the general public.

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<sup>302</sup> *Histoire D'Une Ame*, NEC, 1898, 48.



# **CHAPTER 4 – THE CHANGING VIEWS OF THÉRÈSIAN HOLINESS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. SHIFTING VIEWS OF HOLINESS**

The focus in Part I of this work is the subject of Thérésian piety. During the twentieth century, one can see the occurrence of several shifts in the theology and practice of holiness or piety. This chapter will focus on the major elements that changed as the century progressed. We will not make an attempt to recount the main events of Thérèse's life. Rather, attention will be drawn to those areas where authors describe her views as being different from what they actually were, or where completely new elements of holiness were introduced into public dialogue giving credit, of course, to Thérèse.

### **B. THREE TYPES OF HOLINESS**

Another focus in this chapter will be on the three types of piety that can be identified in Thérèse's work. I have labelled these: Core Piety, Culturally Related Piety, and Constructed Piety. The elements of Core Piety are those aspects of holiness that are timeless, should be evidenced in any faithful Christian tradition and find roots of their expression in the Old and New Testaments. Culturally Influenced Piety refers to the influence of culture on the core elements of holiness. Every culture views and defines piety according to its own values. Theology is also influenced by culture, which, in turn, influences holiness. Catholic tradition would argue that this perfection of holiness has been evidenced in the lives of the saints. Some elements of Pentecostal tradition would agree that perfection is possible in this life, but the majority of Pentecostals would not concur. Constructed Piety is a cultural influence of piety unrelated to the core elements and created by those within a particular context. Before we can examine the changes, however, we must first set the context of the twentieth century as affected by Vatican II.

## **I. VATICAN II**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The most significant event of the twentieth century for the Roman Catholic Church was, without question, Vatican II (1962-1965). Some might argue with good reason that the Church has not followed through on the changes decided during this Council, but instead has fallen into a conservatism motivated

by former Pope John Paul II.<sup>303</sup> Even so, the changes begun during this Council were earthshaking. Space will not permit a complete summary, but a few important events should be highlighted:

### A. HOLINESS REDEFINED

The universal call to holiness was defined in the Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*): “A baptised person is one who, as St. Paul says, has died with Christ and risen again with the risen Christ to a life of Christian holiness. The programme of the quest of holiness is not something separate from the ordinary conditions of life of the faithful.”<sup>304</sup> This agrees with the observations of Novak on the second session: “...in the last analysis, all Christians are called to sanctity.”<sup>305</sup> The Constitution on the Church endeavoured to focus on the fact that there is only one kind of Christian holiness and that the foundation of that holiness is *caritas*, “charity, love or esteem.” It is this *caritas* or love that provides the balance necessary for the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Here especially, one can see the possible impact by Thérèse of Lisieux on the Council. Although some might argue that the influence came from others, there is no question but that her theme of love was designed to temper and give value to all other aspects of religious life.

Christopher Butler aptly states that the Catholic Church has, by its recognition of saints, created the idea that there are two castes or levels of Christians. This document says rather that in Christ all believers are equal and called to a holy life. The decree on the Apostolate of the Laity emphasised the importance of lay spirituality and its apostolic mission. Patrick Keegan, an English observer at the Council, said of this decree: “For the first time the apostolic activity of the laity is the object of a conciliar decree. The decree consecrates all the achievements of the lay apostolate in the previous forty years; it also ratifies most solemnly the task of the layman in the Church, the people of God.”<sup>306</sup> The theological basis for expanding the ministry of laymen was derived from a work by the French Dominican theologian, Yves Congar. Published in 1950, *Jalon pour une Théologie du laïcat* attempted to move the Church from a model based on hierarchy and rules to one of inclusiveness and community.<sup>307</sup> Thérèse’s “little way” possessed an inclusiveness that may have also influenced the Council in this area.

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<sup>303</sup> At the time of writing this chapter, a new Pope has been named, Benedict XVI. It seems likely that he will follow the conservative path of his predecessor. In fact, his recent actions are possibly an attempt to undo the progressive thoughts and actions of Vatican II.

<sup>304</sup> Christopher Butler. *The Theology of Vatican II*. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1967), 78.

<sup>305</sup> Michael Novak. *The Open Church*. (London: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 169.

<sup>306</sup> Patrick Keegan. Cited by Derik Worlock. *Ibid*, 248.

<sup>307</sup> Carmel Elizabeth McEnroy. *Guests in their own House*. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 25.



The Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis humanae*) states that, "the human person has a right to immunity from coercion on the part of individuals, social groups, or any human power. Government should respect and favour the religious life of the citizenry but should not command or inhibit religious acts."<sup>308</sup> I believe that this declaration on Religious Freedom was the key element in changes occurring after the Council as regards attitudes towards Thérèse, as it was the freedom given to all people that allowed Catholics the ability to express their ideas with less fear of discipline by the Church. The Roman Catholic Church thus opened itself up to new models of holiness, some very much outside of acceptable theological practice.

## B. THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Prior to Vatican II, it was generally agreed that a married Catholic woman's vocation was her husband and family. A career *and* a family could not be managed. Bonaventure wrote to his novices: "Shun the society of women as you would a snake and never speak with a woman unless necessity compels you. Do not look at any woman's face, and if any woman speaks to you cut her off as quickly as possible."<sup>309</sup> This attitude towards women worsened over time. Laymen had been invited to the first two sessions of the Council, but it was not until just before the start of the third session that the Pope announced that women would be invited as well. This was, in fact, the first time women had been allowed to participate at an ecumenical council.<sup>310</sup> On a more significant level, women were excluded from studying theology. When finally permitted into the Doctoral program at the Catholic University of America, they could only listen to the lectures while sitting in the hall. Since women could not take theology courses, they obviously could not be theology professors.

The first woman to arrive at the Council, Marie-Louise Monnet, entered on September 25, 1964, and was well known to many of the bishops for having founded Catholic action groups in France.<sup>311</sup> A breakthrough took place at the personal initiative of Bernard Häring, secretary for the commission on the Church in the World of Today (*Gaudium et spes*). Without permission, he simply invited five of the women auditors to participate in this commission along with 30 bishops, 49 *periti*<sup>312</sup>, and 10 laymen. Other women were invited to participate in the 10 sub-commissions that reworked the various texts during

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<sup>308</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. 417.

<sup>309</sup> Bonaventure, Cited by McEnroy, 23.

<sup>310</sup> Prior to the third session the wives of observers were allowed to come to the council with increasing privileges, but nothing like what would happen when women were officially invited. McEnroy, 15.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*, 47. She also was the sister of the famous European politician Jean Monnet.

<sup>312</sup> These were experts invited to participate for their knowledgeable advice, normally well known theologians.

the Council.<sup>313</sup> Since that commission, there have been women active in roles never before offered, such as Rosemary Goldie, who served for 10 years in the Roman Curia.

One of the curious results following the Council's acceptance of women in ministry is how it has actually decreased. In 1976, Pope Paul VI published *Inter Insigniores* reasserting in the strongest terms the prohibition of the ordination of women. The same was declared again in 1994 by the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, wherein the past, present and future ordination of women was declared unacceptable. Women are encouraged to follow the roles of "holy martyrs, virgins, and the mothers of families."<sup>314</sup> It is very likely that this second publication came as a result of the Anglican Church deciding to ordain 38 women, which has been cited as an obstacle to ecumenical progress, according to the Roman Curia.

The problem here may also be seen as deeper and more theological. Pope John-Paul II said that it was ontologically impossible to ordain women. The priest represents Christ in an active role, and the Church represents Mary in a passive role. Balthasar, considered by some to be the favourite theologian of Pope John Paul II,<sup>315</sup> states the problem, as summarised by David Brown, in this way: "The idea is that the feminine is to be equated with receptivity, and as such provides the most adequate model of the proper relationship of humanity in general towards God."<sup>316</sup> In this thinking, the Church has primarily a feminine role and God a primarily masculine role. It is true that in the culture of the day women were more passive than men. Still, the true problem here is that in presenting women as passive they are not able to fulfil the role of priest, actively working for God. Balthasar goes on to compare the Church to the harlot, a common image in the Old Testament. Brown responds to this as well:

Certainly, the image is a frequent one in the Old Testament, but, even if scriptural, one cannot have it both ways, Either the feminine is as capable of the active role as the male, or else the model of faithful obedience belongs essentially to the feminine and it is male imagery which we must use whenever we speak of rebellion against God.<sup>317</sup>

Brown is correct that the separation of male/female as active/receptive does not fit with scripture.

Balthasar's failure here reflects the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church without giving other images in scripture equal weight.

Some important changes took place for women as a result of Vatican II. One was the change of the habit worn by the religious. More important was a change in attitude concerning ministry: "the sisters

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<sup>313</sup> McEnroy, 128.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>315</sup> David Brown, *Discipleship and Imagination*, 274.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.



could no longer take refuge in the security of old customs and practices, an infantile self-effacement, and a static retreat from new and pressing demands of their professions and apostolates.”<sup>318</sup> The Sisters of Loretto were a part of this unrelated piety when the Council thrust them into renewal. This quotation reminds one of the spirituality of Carmel when Thérèse entered:

...still publicly acknowledging trivial, childish faults, kissing the chapel or dining room floor in reparation, and at times as penance eating their breakfast kneeling in silence before going out to their daily work as college presidents, school principals, or highly competent teachers... Making personal decisions was out of the question in the olden days, as blind obedience to superiors and a written rule were idealized as the highest form of perfection.

An enormous shift occurred in relation to holiness and sanctity as a result of Vatican II. Minuscule, self-deprecating acts were replaced with acts of humble service. Even the ceremonies equated with entering the religious life had to be altered in order to diminish their dualistic flavour. After Vatican II, the focus turned to the value of the human person. The most significant change concerning women took place within the first decade after the close of the Council, when women were elevated to the post of doctor or teacher in the Church.

One of the key issues for progressive women is that of ordination. Some leading Catholic women continue to oppose the idea of women priests. For McEnroy, this is the main issue. He critiques the publication against the ordination of women, *Inter Insigniores*, as having been founded on poor research: “Had the 1973 papal commission on women, requested by the 1971 synod, done its work properly, it would have given the Pope more concrete data on anthropology, ecclesiology, and culture that could have enabled him and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to write a more relevant and credible text.”<sup>319</sup> The progress that was made possible by the work of John XXIII and Paul VI “was stymied, made inoperable, or betrayed by the Roman curia, and especially by Pope John Paul II.”<sup>320</sup>

Although it is not the focus of this work to analyze the issue of women and ordination, it is surprising to discover how little to nothing is written about the fact that women were even present at the Council. Either the writers did not know what to say or chose to ignore the issue, perhaps out of antipathy.

### **C. INCREASED USE OF SCRIPTURE**

The Constitution on Divine Revelation addressed the issue of tradition and scripture. Albert C. Outler, a Methodist observer at the Council, stated that the early drafts on the schema on revelation

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<sup>317</sup> David Brown, *Discipleship and Imagination*, 277-278.

<sup>318</sup> McEnroy, 165.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, 270.

<sup>320</sup> Gladys Parentelli, Cited by McEnroy, 248.

followed the pattern of the Council of Trent. He was satisfied, however, that real changes were made in the second and third sessions<sup>321</sup>

The importance of scripture is seen in some of the changes which took place in the Constitution on the Church. Scripture was followed in an attempt to restore the permanent diaconate, without the requirement of celibacy at certain times. Also critical was the acceptance of the biblical principle of the priesthood of all believers. Although the Catholic Church has not truly established this doctrine, it has at least acknowledged its foundation in scripture. It is feasible that Thérèse helped to create the climate that made such changes possible.

#### **D. OPENNESS TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

The prophetic role of the Church was addressed, as well as Spiritual Gifts.<sup>322</sup> There was already beginning to be contact between Pentecostals and Charismatics during the early 1960's. Though one could build a case for spiritual gifts solely on the influence of Roman Catholic doctrine one must recognise the influence of outside sources in this new openness to the work of the Holy Spirit. More will be said of this in Chapter 8.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Yves Congar admits that the Church has had to deal with crises since the Council. Still, he acknowledges positive outcomes: "Many local Churches are displaying great vitality. Charisms and basic ministries are everywhere in evidence. Ecumenical efforts are gradually coming to maturity. Christians are everywhere committed to their fellow men, especially those who are crushed or put to the test."<sup>323</sup> General de Gaulle stated that Vatican II was "the greatest event in the twentieth century..."<sup>324</sup> While I disagree, it was clearly the most important event in the Roman Catholic Church in several centuries. Although they remain behind the times in many areas, and the Roman Curia seems to continue its opposition to *aggiornamento*, numerous issues needing attention were addressed and the Catholic Church is clearly better for having done so. Holiness has been redefined with a new emphasis on ministry to the world rather than separation from it. Women have been given more significant roles in the Church. Scripture has been lifted to a place of greater importance and Spiritual Gifts have also risen in value.

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<sup>321</sup> Albert C Outler, Alberic Stacpoole, Editor. *Vatican II by those who were there*. (London: Cassell Ltd., 1986), 175.

<sup>322</sup> Cardinal Suenens spoke at length about the use of Spiritual Gifts. Cited by Novak, 148-151.

<sup>323</sup> Novak, 352.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid, 339.



## II. LATE TWENTIETH-CENTURY AUTHORS

### INTRODUCTION

When considering the life of Thérèse, one should ask what legitimate changes she brought to piety. How was she perceived in the years following her life? How did her perceived piety evolve? Some have sought to make her more significant than she was, creating new modes of piety of which Thérèse herself likely did not conceive. Others have found in her a return to the historically-valued elements of holiness—Core Piety.

In this section, we will examine several authors and their views concerning Thérèse. Following is a description of the major writers and works: Stéphane-Joseph Piat (1965) is one of the recognised experts on Thérèse and her family and was a personal friend of Céline Martin. His extensive work on Thérèse, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux: A la Découverte de la Voie D'Enfance*, was first published in 1964. Although available during Vatican II, most of it belongs, in spirit, to the period prior to the Council.

From Hans Urs von Balthasar (1970/1973), we will examine his first work originally published in German (1970) and then translated into English (1992), *Two Sisters in the Spirit: Thérèse of Lisieux & Elizabeth of the Trinity*. Second, we will consider a chapter he contributed in the *Conférence du Centenaire* that took place in 1973. The dilemma was that the great saints were inimitable: Saint Francis, Mary and the Christ.<sup>325</sup> According to Balthasar, Thérèse was able to overcome this paradox by providing a path that everyone could follow, her “little way”.

In *Conférence du Centenaire* (1973) one finds a great collection of theologians commenting on the life and work of Thérèse. Only eight years after the close of Vatican II, there was a great shift in theological thinking concerning her. The list of those included in this work is impressive: René Laurentin, Jean Guitton, Guy Gaucher, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Bernard Bro, and Jean-François Six. Below I have highlighted some of the key issues raised by these great minds.

Noel O'Donoghue (1989) begins his chapters on Thérèse by noting the cultural context into which she was born, an era including Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, the world of Existentialism, Adolf Hitler, Charles Darwin, and Karl Marx. Some of these were young men and some had passed on, but clearly the world was experiencing a massive change of philosophical orientation. He refers to

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<sup>325</sup> Hans Urs Von Balthasar. *Thérèse de Lisieux: Conférence du Centenaire 1873-1973*. (Paris: L'Institute Catholique de Paris, 1973), 108.

“Thérèse of Lisieux and her mystical ‘atheism’ that speaks to the depths of our unbelieving and despairing hearts...”<sup>326</sup>

In John Udris’ *Holy Daring* (1997), the centre of attention is Thérèse’s bold confidence. Several events in her life support his claim, such as her audience with Pope Leo XIII. Petitot, many years earlier, also mentioned her boldness, so this was not a new idea. What is new is Udris’ use of scripture. Father Joseph Baudry (1998) organised a colloquium for the Catholic Institute and the Carmelites of Toulouse; his writings focus on the work of Petitot, who is mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>327</sup>

A collection of theological works was released under the title *L’apport théologique de sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, docteur de l’Eglise*, edited by Denis Chardonens and P. Hugo (2000) and focuses on Pope John-Paul II declaring Thérèse a “Docteur de l’Eglise universelle” on November 10, 1996.<sup>328</sup> M.-D. Poinsenet and Bernard Bro wrote biographies about the life of Thérèse with few or no revolutionary theological ideas. Whether from conservative motives or the desire to discover the truth, their books were less about theology and more about recounting the historical narrative of Thérèse’s life. Most recently (2006), Thomas R. Nevin published *Thérèse of Lisieux: God’s Gentle Warrior*, examining all of her writings.

## A. CHANGING VIEWS OF HOLINESS

### 1. Rejection of Purgatory

Piat accepts Thérèse’s rejection of purgatory, but states it stronger than it truly was: “La théologie de Thérèse, consignée dans l’acte d’offrande, entend que la charité divine, opérant dans l’âme toute livrée, la rénove d’instant en instant, ne laissant nulle matière au châtement futur. Bien peu de prédicateurs et d’auteurs spirituels eussent, à l’époque, ratifié pareille audace”<sup>329</sup> In the collection by Baudry, there is a work by Father Louis-Marie Yver concerning Thérèse and the interpretation of Father Philippe of the Trinity. Yver states that Thérèse was seen as liberating the Church from purgatory.

The words of John of the Cross are contradictory. On the one hand, he says that very few will escape the purification of purgatory. On the other hand, he speaks of being in “security on the day of

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<sup>326</sup> Noel O’Donoghue. *Mystics For Our Time: Carmelite Meditations for a New Age*. Edingburgh: T & T Clark Ltd, 1989, 1.

<sup>327</sup> Baudry, 69.

<sup>328</sup> Jesus Castellano Cervera, Editors D. Chardonens and Ph. Hugo. *L’apport théologique de sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, docteur de l’Eglise*. (Toulouse; France: Editions du Carmel, 2000), 15.

<sup>329</sup> Stéphane-Joseph Piat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux: A la Découverte de la Voie D’Enfance*. 2<sup>e</sup> édition. (Paris: Editions Franciscaines, 1965) 316.



judgement.”<sup>330</sup> Thérèse continued to follow John of the Cross in her statement that love removes fear.<sup>331</sup> Overcoming the fear of purgatory was a step in the direction of scripture—or as I have labelled it, Core Piety. Although Thérèse’s statements about purgatory are not very strong, the perception is that she rejected the necessity of punishment in purgatory and is given credit for this important change in modern Catholic holiness. In truth, avoiding purgatory was an idea supported by “the Constitution for all Carmelites who faithfully adhered to the Rule.”<sup>332</sup> Thérèse also believed that Mère Geneviève was so saintly at her death that she too would escape purgatory.

One can see the relevance of Thérèse’s teaching on this subject. For her, being devoted to love meant that purgatory need not be feared. Since she spoke of the possibility of going there, it is not possible that she completely rejected the theological doctrine of purgatory itself, but that her emphasis on love removed any fear.

Today one can see in Catholic circles a diminishing importance given to purgatory. Recently, in the United States, some bishops have required that lay ministers affirm certain points of Catholic doctrine: “On the doctrinal level, the affirmation attests to belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and to church doctrines on hell, purgatory, the nature of the church and the suitability of special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.”<sup>333</sup> Suffice to say that it would not be necessary to require a doctrinal affirmation if these issues were not being questioned on a larger scale.

During the early Reformation, purgatory was a major source of conflict, thus it is doubtful that the Church would remove the doctrine altogether. However, on a local level support for purgatory is waning, along with many other time-honoured Catholic traditions. Kelton Cobb notes that the emphasis on purgatory began to diminish when the issue of time began to influence modern culture: “Whatever atonement for sin that could be achieved and whatever salvation might be attained must occur entirely within the short span of this life.”<sup>334</sup> Perhaps Cobb oversimplifies the matter, but the suggestion that time influences one’s understanding of purgatory is likely significant in its redefinition of or rejection by many modern thinkers.

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<sup>330</sup> John of the Cross, Cited by Father Louis-Marie Yver, “Le Père Philippe de la Trinité, interprète de Thérèse de Lisieux.” Baudry, 199. My translation.

<sup>331</sup> Thérèse’s letter 247 to Abbey Bellière is cited here by Father Yver.

<sup>332</sup> Nevin, 133, This same idea is repeated by Nevin on page 152.

<sup>333</sup> Robert V. Vasa. “Bishops Check Lay Ministers on Teaching.” *America*, Vol. 191, Issue 4, (August 16, 2004), p. 5.

<sup>334</sup> Kelton Cobb. “The Persistence of Purgatory.” *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 79, No. 1 (January 1999), p. 155.

## 2. Rejection of Legalism

One of the key points, according to Piat, was Thérèse's rejection of the Jansenistic practices still common in her day.<sup>335</sup> Ida Friederike Görres (1959) defined Jansenism as follows<sup>336</sup>: "It trained the conscience to ascribe the whole burden of every objective infraction to personal culpability, and to measure this guilt against the holiness of God."<sup>337</sup> Into this stifling atmosphere, Thérèse brought a breath of fresh air, according to Piat. He sees in Thérèse a rejection of the harsh legalism of Jansenism and a renewal of God as a loving Father; Piat places an emphasis on the mercy of God, but does not go as far as later writers who perceived in Thérèse a hint of grace, as revealed by the Reformers. Only minor connections are made to Paul and other New Testament epistles.

Hans Urs von Balthasar describes Thérèse as a warrior similar to Joan or Arc, but rather than fighting military battles for an earthly king, she fought to encourage people to love the King of heaven. By rejecting pharisaic hypocrisy, one can see a return to the Core Piety of Christ. The Lord was merciless in His attack against the duplicity of the religious leaders of His day. An even better example of Thérèse's emphasis on Core Piety is seen through the eyes of Balthasar concerning her return to grace and the destruction of the piety of works: "As far as Thérèse is concerned, the real purpose in demolishing the whole ethic of works is to allow the shining miracle of divine grace to light up the life of every Christian...the elevator is nothing else but the love that destroys all distances and eliminates all calculable continuity."<sup>338</sup> As previously noted, the elevator that Thérèse sought was a shortcut to heaven and allowed her to avoid the long stairway of perfection established by previous saints. Balthasar interprets this as a new emphasis on grace, a nice idea but not truly Thérésian.

Udris also desires to make Thérèse a friend of sinners, yet another removal of legalism. There is no doubt that Thérèse was compassionate towards people in sin. The common examples are Pranzini and the women at Carmel who were so repulsive to the rest of the community. Although it is something that Thérèse perhaps knew to be right and tried to exemplify, this comparison is nevertheless stilted. The Christ of the New Testament had a genuine love for sinners, a compassion flowing from within. For Thérèse, it was something forced, accomplished only through overcoming an immense internal struggle by hundreds of miniscule sacrifices—which was not the same kind of authentic love.

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<sup>335</sup> Stéphane-Joseph Piat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, 373.

<sup>336</sup> For the historical background on Jansenism, see note 51.

<sup>337</sup> Ida Friederike Görres, 334.

<sup>338</sup> Von Balthasar, *Two Sisters*, 251.



Anne-Elisabeth Steinmann (1982) states that Thérèse moved past the perfectionistic tendencies of her day and directed all of her novices towards a life of mercy and love: “S’écartant délibérément des illusions du « perfectionnisme » trop prône au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle ; la sainte a retrouvé le chemin de vérité : une course vers le Christ...dans la liberté de l’amour, les yeux fixés sur lui et non sur soi.”<sup>339</sup>

Udris also credits Thérèse with the demise of Jansenism.<sup>340</sup> O’Donoghue notes that the Martin family, where Thérèse received her early formation, was against the moralistic, fear-filled Jansenism of the day. However, Steinman and Udris are mistaken here. From both her mother and Aunt Dosithée, Thérèse received a large dose of Jansenistic moralism. Thérèse’s mother saw the monastic life as the only way to sainthood, not an uncommon attitude during that time. Only the religious could ever hope to become saints.<sup>341</sup> Aunt Dosithée was even more moralistic and fear-filled. Although she died when Thérèse was quite young, her attitudes were transmitted to Thérèse’s older sisters who were responsible for Thérèse’s formation. Poinset credits Aunt Dosithée with encouraging the method of counting acts of virtue.<sup>342</sup> Six is less than complimentary of Aunt Dosithée: “La méthode d’éducation de sœur Dosithée est brutale... La spiritualité doloriste et réparationniste de Dosithée est, on le sait, partagée par sa sœur Zélie. Celle-ci a depuis longtemps engagé ses filles dans l’examen minutieux des fautes et la culpabilisation.”<sup>343</sup> A telling example of this is seen in the moral manipulation that took place regarding Marie’s need for dental work and her grandfather’s need for help in purgatory.

There is evidence in her writings, which Udris quotes, to support the idea that Thérèse fought against the Jansenistic self-examination. But it was inherited from her family and culture and, as has already been shown, was an influence she could never flee in full. While it is inaccurate to suggest that Thérèse rejected perfectionism, one could possibly say that for Roman Catholics Thérèse served as a bridge between the perfectionism of the nineteenth century and the emphasis on grace in the twentieth century. However, she was wrapped too tightly in the bondage of perfectionism to escape it, either in her thinking or teaching.

### 3. Shift to Charity

Thérèse undeniably brought a new prominence to love. Yet, I would suggest that it was only at the very end of her life that she realised the central aim of Christianity: to love God *and* one’s fellow man.

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<sup>339</sup> Steinmann. *La Nuit et la Flamme*, 94.

<sup>340</sup> John Udris. 46.

<sup>341</sup> Bernard Bro. *Thérèse de Lisieux*, 32.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>343</sup> Jean-François Six. *La Véritable Enfance de Thérèse de Lisieux*, 70.

In addition, Piat writes nothing of the paradox of someone in a convent trying to follow the command of charity: the vast majority who could receive that love were far removed from her! Piat would counter that Thérèse's work was accomplished in the missions that followed her life on earth. If this is the case, and a Pentecostal would never concur, her life was still lacking in terms of love for her neighbour. Of her 24 years, only in the last year did she recognise the importance of this precept. She had been obsessed with the need to love God and, while admirable, in so doing had neglected to love her fellow man. Even though she is known as the saint of love, her writings seem to want for the genuineness of a love that comes from the heart, not forced or artificial. Nonetheless, others see this transformation in her, so in some ways that perception of change is valuable.

#### **4. Shift to Holiness of Relationship**

Piat follows Petitot in saying that Thérèse did not adhere to the prescribed methods of meditation that were a part of the tradition of Carmel, and in particular, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross.<sup>344</sup> In the end, Piat concludes that her style of contemplation made her a "maîtresse d'oraison" for her disciples, so she rejected the model of her Carmelite mentors for a style of meditation that was more relational. Balthasar agrees with Petitot here, as would I, that Thérèse did not follow the Carmelite tradition concerning meditation. In fact, she would often fall asleep. Rather than be embarrassed by this weakness, she claimed that God would not be offended because He knows that we are only dust. Moreover, God was like a physician, causing her to sleep so that He could perform spiritual surgery.

Nevin takes this intimate relationship a step further. By having the communion with God Thérèse did not need books or teachers, an idea from *The Imitation*, nearly rejecting the whole of Church creeds, councils and theology.<sup>345</sup> Laurentin credits Thérèse with removing the levels of contemplation.<sup>346</sup> This was established with Petitot and can be seen as a statement of fact. Not only did she refuse the great traditions of the past, but she also distanced herself from her own spiritual tradition. In this sense, Thérèse redefined holiness; rather than in degrees of perfection, communion was the desired result. At the end of the twentieth century, Thérèse's teachings made the pursuit of holiness more accessible to the average Catholic. Her emphasis on relationship can be seen as a return to Core Piety or holiness clearly evidenced in the life of Christ.

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<sup>344</sup> Stéphane-Joseph Piat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, 254.

<sup>345</sup> Nevin, 296.

<sup>346</sup> René Laurentin. *Thérèse de Lisieux*, 175.



## 5. Shift to Existential Theology

Balthasar goes on to define Thérèse as an existential theologian, which is unquestionably true. Her theology was formed more by her experience than by scripture, often ignoring Catholic tradition. He states that she was “taught directly by the Holy Spirit,”<sup>347</sup> which agrees with her writings. Like many of the great mystics of the past, she listened to an “inner voice” for direction. Her test of true doctrine was whether it could be lived out.

Laurentin, following the lead of Balthasar, emphasises the importance of existential theology, saying that both Paul and Thérèse were “formé directement par le Christ et par l’Esprit...”<sup>348</sup> Theologically, Laurentin reaffirms the importance of Thérèse’s emphasis on piety being put into practice, which agrees with others who have already been cited: Bernard Bro attempts to define her experiential mysticism as “...une action vécue à deux : l’homme acceptant d’être cherché par Dieu et pouvant en prendre conscience.”<sup>349</sup> Nevin would concur that Thérèse’s theology was formed by her experiences: “If she has a wish, God has planted it in her, and it was meant to be fulfilled.”<sup>350</sup>

By her emphasis on experience, she both moved towards and away from Core Piety. She moved towards it by aligning herself with the New Testament practice of a Holy Spirit-animated life. At the same time, she moved away from the core by saying that doctrine could be evaluated and chosen on the basis of this Holy Spirit experience alone. She took her personal relationship with God and made it the filter of true doctrine. Balthasar identifies the danger of her path in that “the subjective limitations of one person’s experience will be taken as the measure for the objective truths of revelation.”<sup>351</sup> He justifies her existential emphasis by highlighting her desire to do great things in heaven. Here, the fact that Thérèse simply desired something was seen as proof that it was from God.<sup>352</sup> Balthasar has the same problem as Thérèse: he wants to move towards the core of piety, a life animated by the power of the Holy Spirit. But in so doing, he accepts without criticism Thérèse’s untested theological ideas concerning life after death. He is torn, as was she, between her experience with God and the truths of scripture. This brings us to what could be called Constructed Piety. Balthasar has great appreciation for Thérèse and so is unwilling to dismiss her wild speculation. Much like Origin, she went beyond the truths of scripture into an uncharted area of conjecture. Theologically, her desire alone was not enough to substantiate her claim of work in

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<sup>347</sup> Von Balthasar, *Two Sisters*, 58.

<sup>348</sup> René Laurentin, 160.

<sup>349</sup> Bernard Bro, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 132.

<sup>350</sup> Nevin, 292.

<sup>351</sup> Von Balthasar, *Two Sisters*, 65.

heaven.<sup>353</sup> There is no question that the average twenty-first century individual would fancy a Christianity that could be accepted or rejected on the basis of one's personal experience. The post-modern, anti-absolutist western culture would flourish in this environment. But should one make Thérèse's experiential filter the test of true doctrine? Should one's personal experience be the filter for biblical doctrine? I suggest this would be very risky.

## 6. Shift to Pauline and Reformist Theology

The majority of recent authors make a connection between Thérèse, Paul and the Protestant Reformers. An exception to this is Piat, who contrasts Thérèse with Martin Luther.<sup>354</sup> Rather than find common ground with Luther as many are now doing, he rejects Luther. Balthasar struggles with the theology of reformation versus Catholic doctrine. He is constantly comparing Thérèse to Luther, stating that she examined scripture and came to conclusions that one might suggest agree with Luther in the areas of assurance of salvation, trust as overcoming works, and the mercy of the New Testament. Balthasar has found a legitimate connection between Thérèse and Paul, with the strongest statement connecting Thérèse with the grace expressed by Paul is in her "images bibliques."<sup>355</sup> On the reverse side of some drawings of her brothers and sisters who died in childhood, Thérèse placed several verses. One quotation was from Romans 4:4, 6, and one from Romans 3:24. Although strongly stated, it is in a rather obscure place. The only statement of these verses in her autobiography is Romans 3:24 in Manuscript C, 35r°. The same verse is also mentioned in letters 185 and 197: "...they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 3:24 RSV) Coming very late in her life and mentioned only once in her autobiography, one can hardly label this the centre of Thérèse's theology. While not nearly as important as Balthasar would have one believe, one must still credit Thérèse for her emphasis on grace and possibly even a post-reformation interpretation. Some might also say that her emphasis on love moved in the direction, or was a type, of grace.

Balthasar then goes on to show how Thérèse maintained the importance of works, rejecting the Protestant interpretation of Paul. Good works must still be done; however, they are not a result of one's own goodness but of the good that God places within. The criticism that Catholics might level at a

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<sup>352</sup> Von Balthasar, *Two Sisters*, 73.

<sup>353</sup> She is said to be working in heaven by the miracles that come as a result of her intercession, commonly known as the "shower of roses."

<sup>354</sup> Stéphane-Joseph Piat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, 376.

<sup>355</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, 1214.



Protestant understanding of justification by faith is the trap of lawlessness. This is a valid concern. Meyer states concerning Luther's theology of justification:

It might be all too tempting to mistake Luther as saying that the Christian's "walk" is a kind of tightrope between two apparent extremes, between the pitfall of carnal license on the one side and the pitfall of judaising enslavement on the other, between antinomianism and legalism.<sup>356</sup>

There is a question of how works fit into justification. For Protestants, good works follow justification. For Roman Catholics, one is enabled to do good works. The question of works and faith was addressed by Augustine in the early fifth century: "Certain laymen, he says, had sent him some writings to be examined. These writings taught that good works were not necessary to obtain eternal life, that faith alone was sufficient for salvation. If a man had the faith and was baptised, he would be saved."<sup>357</sup> Augustine was apparently fighting against two heresies at the time of this writing: Pelagianism and the other extreme, justification by faith alone. In Augustine's own words: "This is that opinion which says that they who live most evil and most disgraceful lives, even though they continue to live in this way, will be saved and will gain eternal life as long as they believe in Christ and receive His sacraments."<sup>358</sup> Protestants would agree that this is a heresy. One who believes in Christ and partakes of the sacraments but lives intentionally in sin is not worthy of eternal life. Space here will not permit a full exposition of the problem of faith and works, but Catholics and Protestants would agree on the aforementioned point. They would also agree that faith must produce good works.

Concerning Balthasar, I would say that he is attempting to move towards a reformation understanding of justification while maintaining a Roman Catholic structure of penance. My perspective is obviously biased as a Protestant, but I see his movement towards justification by faith as a move towards Core Piety. He gravitates towards the core of Christian piety while attempting to hold onto traditional Catholic theology.

According to Balthasar, Luther made an error by taking the mystical relationship of love between God and man and generalising it into a formula for all sinners. It is my opinion that Balthasar is correct about Thérèse, but incorrect about Luther. One of Thérèse's greatest errors, in my view, was to overestimate the value of her experiences. While her experiences may have been valid and from God, they would still need to be weighed against scripture. Without subjecting her experiential doctrines to the

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<sup>356</sup> Carl Meyer, Editor. *Luther for an Ecumenical Age*. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), 224.

<sup>357</sup> Saint Augustine. *On Faith and Works*. Translated and annotated by Gregory J. Lombardo, C.S.C., S.T.D. (New York: Newman Press, 1988), 1. This comment is written in the introduction concerning the date of composition and purpose. The given date of writing is near the end of 412..

teaching of scripture, she allowed her limited cultural perspective to become the only voice of God. In contrast to this, Luther took his understanding of grace and how it affects man existentially and applied it to all sinners. This was not an error on his part, but a return to the centre of theological truth as found in scripture. Even so, one can find a strong emphasis on grace and faith in Balthasar's work. He compares Thérèse to the reformers, suggesting they had many points in common.<sup>359</sup>

Balthasar attempts to move towards justification by faith and states that by the commitment of faith a believer is able to "surrender themselves in childlike trust."<sup>360</sup> As a result then, good works will flow out of this experience of faith. Hans Küng, in his early work, would agree. In his work on Karl Barth, *Justification*, he states:

We learn through faith, and only through faith, that the justified man is not just a beautiful idea, an illusion or myth—but a reality. It is fundamentally impossible for anyone to prove himself by his own power, for only in humble faith can we give an affirmative answer to the question of the reality and existence of the man justified by God...<sup>361</sup>

Küng goes on to define the relationship between faith and works:

It means "the opposition of faith to all and every work...that no human work as such either is or includes man's justification"... (IV/1,621)<sup>362</sup>... The deepest reason for the *sola fides* is the *solus Christus*. It is He alone in whom man is justified and revealed as justified...the reformers were one with Paul in holding that no work performed constitutes or entails the justification of any sinful man."<sup>363</sup>

Balthasar and Küng both move towards faith in a way that reflects the thought of the reformers, as well as later Protestant theologians.

In Catholic theology, after Vatican II, one can find a strong movement towards a Protestant understanding of works and grace. In fact, there may be movement on both sides, as Protestants set aside hardened views of eternal security for a more realistic theology combining the necessity of holy living with the salvation that comes by faith.

In chapter two of his work, *Thérèse de Lisieux: Mythes et réalité*, René Laurentin compares Thérèse to many other leading Christians and even some non-Christians. The comparison between Paul and Thérèse at this point, however, seems overplayed since Vatican II tradition is subordinate to scripture.

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<sup>358</sup> Saint Augustine. *On Faith and Works*, 55, (Chapter 27, 49, third question.).

<sup>359</sup> Von Balthasar, *Two Sisters*, 283.

<sup>360</sup> Von Balthasar. *The Von Balthasar Reader*, Edited by Medard Kehl and Werner Löser. (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 345.

<sup>361</sup> Hans Küng. *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*. (London: Burns & Oates, 1964), 70.

<sup>362</sup> Karl Barth, *Die Lehre von der Versöhnung* (Jesus Christus, der Herr als Knecht). Cited by Hans Küng, 1964, 71.

<sup>363</sup> Hans Küng, 1964, 71-72.



Still, it appears that Catholic theologians would like to use Thérèse as a means of connection with Paul. She is viewed by some as helping the Church recover truths of scripture.

John Udris moves into some Pauline passages that Thérèse never quoted. On the theme of boldness, for example, Udris cites Galatians 5:13 (RSV),<sup>364</sup> "...you were called to freedom..."—a passage never mentioned by Thérèse.<sup>365</sup> This linking of Thérèse to Paul can be seen in other places in his work as well. Speaking of her retreat and breakthrough under the direction of Alexis Prou, Udris correctly highlights the insight that Thérèse received during this event, "that our defects do not disappoint God." This was a significant change in the piety of her day, but Udris again goes beyond Thérèse by connecting her ideas to the work of Paul. He begins by citing 2 Corinthians 12:5, which is a passage Thérèse referenced three times, fitting well into her "little way". Then Udris focuses on Philippians 3:8-9, verses that Thérèse never used, about faith and the perfection that comes through faith. Udris desires to credit Thérèse with an almost Protestant understanding of works and righteousness, which is not justified.

Later, Udris follows the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar in comparing Thérèse and Elizabeth of the Trinity. According to Udris, Balthasar views them as placing a new emphasis on the return of Christ. Udris takes it a step further, saying they were both "filled with the New Testament Johannine and Pauline concept of 'confidence' (*parrhesia*) in the face of the Day of Judgement."<sup>366</sup> Clearly, Thérèse was consumed with thoughts of the hereafter, but her ideas were not so much Pauline. Udris quotes Romans 5:20 and 8:28, texts to which Thérèse never referred. She quoted Paul's epistles many times, but only to fit her own theological views.

The comparison of Thérèse to Paul is somewhat common, as though the Catholics hope to make Thérèse the focus of their twentieth-first century Reformation or counter-Reformation. Possibly, Catholic theologians desire to use her as the theological foundation for accepting the doctrines of Paul. Is it possible that Catholic theologians are endeavouring to establish a link between Thérèse and Paul or even Protestant doctrines of grace and faith so that they have a reason to distance themselves from the limitations of medieval theology?

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<sup>364</sup> John Udris, 9.

<sup>365</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, 1549. This volume lists the scriptural passages that are referred to by Thérèse. Galatians 5.13 is not listed. It could be an accidental omission on the part of the *Œuvres Complètes*, but the lack of documentation from Udris would lead me to conclude that it is a new idea from him.

<sup>366</sup> Udris, 57.

## 7. Shift to Grace

As has been described, there was in Thérèse a legitimate accent on grace, perhaps not on a Protestant scale, but still existent. Balthasar quotes her as saying: "So long as our actions, no matter how trivial, remain within the focus of love, the Blessed Trinity...gives them a wonderful brilliance and beauty. When Jesus looks at us through the little lens, which is to say, himself, he finds all our doings beautiful..."<sup>367</sup> He notes that few have found such "a striking and theologically exact image of grace." One can see how this resembles Core Piety. Unfortunately, her emphasis on grace is possibly stronger in von Balthasar's mind than it was in actuality in any of Thérèse's writings.

Balthasar goes on to say that the first step towards grace is total surrender to God's love and service, and views this as already accomplished by those who have taken the religious path. Surrender is central in Christian piety, as it brings one back to the core. Christ was clear that one who would follow after Him must "take up his cross."<sup>368</sup> The cross is not a walk of self-will; grace and surrender are vital to Christian piety.

Bernard Bro emphasises the mercy of God in Thérèse's work. How can God's mercy be balanced with His justice? Bro credits Thérèse with brilliantly balancing the two by expounding the issues of predestination, hope, mercy and the last judgement. Thérèse said: "L'âme reçoit exactement de Dieu ce qu'elle en attend."<sup>369</sup> He builds a case for this emphasis on grace by citing her several times: "...s'il ne juge pas nos bonnes actions, il ne jugera pas no mauvaises."<sup>370</sup> Bro sounds more and more like a Protestant: "On est sauvé parce qu'on croit volontiers aux promesses de Dieu, parce qu'on est en affinité, aimanté par la source de ces promesses qui est l'amour."<sup>371</sup>

One could say that Thérèse returned to the core of New Testament piety. The problem was her obsession with perfection so common among the religious in Catholic tradition although it can be found in the Protestant Church as well, for example, in the Holiness tradition. One cannot set aside and hold on to the works of perfection. Nevin also compares Thérèse to Luther in a favourable light, calling her statements later in life about love "recidivism to the pharisaical ledger keeping she had outgrown in her

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<sup>367</sup> Thérèse of Lisieux, *Histoire d'une âme*, (Lisieux, 1923), 290. Translated and Cited by Von Balthasar, 252-253.

<sup>368</sup> Matt. 16:24 RSV

<sup>369</sup> Bernard Bro, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 139.

<sup>370</sup> Thérèse of Lisieux, Cited by Bernard Bro, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 139.

<sup>371</sup> Bernard Bro, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 140.



childhood.”<sup>372</sup> I suggest that she never outgrew this habit of counting; it was not recidivism; it was rearing.

To accept the theology of grace, one must grasp it firmly. Balthasar attempts to hold on concomitantly to a Protestant understanding of grace and, at the same time, a Catholic tradition of works. He also errs in his endorsement of the religious life by suggesting that they have already entered the path of surrender. Religious life is no guarantee of surrender; it can be a path to religious legalism and bigotry, as was illustrated by Thérèse’s life at Carmel.

### 8. Shift to Ecumenism and a Prophetess of Change

Laurentin additionally credits Thérèse with the ecumenical movement developed at Vatican II. The same year his book was published pressure was being applied by the then Pope, Paul VI, to clarify the title of Doctor of the Church. Two women<sup>373</sup> had already been proclaimed Doctors in 1970, and the Pope was considering giving the same title to Thérèse.<sup>374</sup>

In chapter four of his book, Laurentin applies Thérésian ideas to the current time (1972). First, she is given credit for many changes that took place at Vatican II: 1. Faith over fear; 2. Focus on the scriptures and in particular the Gospels; 3. Re-emphasis on charity; 4. Re-emphasis on the mystical body of Christ; 5. The reality of heaven in this life; 6. Re-discovery of the Holy Spirit; 7. The acceptance of contradictory points of view, that is, pluralism.<sup>375</sup> While time does not permit a careful analysis of each of these points, generally speaking, it appears that Laurentin exaggerates Thérèse’s influence.

O’Donoghue states that probably every bishop at Vatican II had read Thérèse’s autobiography. While it is true that her book was widely read, his claim is not substantiated. He compares her influence at Vatican II with the great innovators of the Church: Bernard, Francis, Dominic, Thomas Aquinas, and Ignatius. Each of these men led the Church into a time of awakening: “This is what St Thérèse has given to our time and place: a release of ideas and an enlivening of structures.”<sup>376</sup>

Guillon agrees with Laurentin concerning the new movement of the Church towards ecumenism. Thérèse is credited with having rediscovered the truths of Protestant spirituality seen in both Paul and Augustine, with a new emphasis not on merit but on mercy. She is even compared favourably with John

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<sup>372</sup> Nevin, 302.

<sup>373</sup> Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila.

<sup>374</sup> Jesus Castellano Cervera, *L'apport théologique de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, docteur de l'Eglise*, 4.

<sup>375</sup> René Laurentin, *Thérèse de Lisieux*, 144-147.

<sup>376</sup> Noel O’Donoghue, 128.

Wesley, Islam and Judaism.<sup>377</sup> Here her influence is clearly exaggerated. Guitton has gone far beyond anything that Thérèse could have conceived. He calls it prophetic, but I would call it Constructed Piety for he uses no quotations by Thérèse's to substantiate his claims. It seems very unlikely, considering her extreme loyalty to the Catholic Church and the strict categories of the day, that she would have envisioned a convergence between Catholics and Protestants. If she followed the thinking of her namesake, the Protestants were the scourge of the earth and responsible for all evil taking place in the Catholic Church. Guitton has clearly exceeded the theology of Thérèse to make her the reason for Catholic acceptance of Protestant views.

Was Thérèse's doctrine this revolutionary, or was it only the wish of Catholic theologians to find in her a doctrine approximating the Reformation in Catholic form? Her ideas were not always clearly stated and were blended with those of old. Often it was not God's love that was emphasised, but her love for Him, carrying with it a flavour of works rather than grace. It is as though she was earning His goodness, which has traces of the Jansenism that others credit her with destroying.

### **9. Shift Towards Feminine Theology**

Noel O'Donoghue praises Thérèse as "the greatest feminine theologian of our epoch,"<sup>378</sup> contrasting feminine and feminist theology. The feminine writers included Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena. According to O'Donoghue, there were men with such a bent as well, for example, Charles Williams.<sup>379</sup> An example of feminine theology is Thérèse's emphasis on the importance of love.

Barbara Corrado Pope describes changes in feminine thought in the American context, focusing on such issues as the view of God as kinder or more loving, and a decrease in the doctrine of limbo, as well as a greater emphasis on the Holy Family.<sup>380</sup> It is quite true that Thérèse lived in the world of the feminine. She was surrounded by only women and communicated in a feminine manner with feminine ideas. This fact alone may make the reading of her work difficult for men who think more tangibly.<sup>381</sup>

O'Donoghue portrays the Virgin Mary as the central figure of Carmelite mysticism, which is true both historically and in the life of Thérèse. The tradition of Carmel looks first to Elijah for inspiration, but then to Mary. O'Donoghue says that one can see in both Teresa of Jesus and Thérèse of Lisieux significant relationships with men. Teresa of Jesus had a personal relationship with John of the Cross. For

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<sup>377</sup> Jean Guitton, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 52.

<sup>378</sup> Noel O'Donoghue, 132.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>380</sup> Barbara Corrado Pope. "A Heroine without Heroics: The Little Flower of Jesus and Her Times." *Church History*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (March 1988), 52-53.



Thérèse, the relationships with men were mostly through writing to her two missionary “brothers.”

O’Donoghue would like to portray Thérèse as a person of warm, intimate relationships with men, but that is not possible either in the cultural context or in her own mind. One can see this from her own comments about men on her trip to Rome and by her desperate attack against the possibility that her sister might dance with a man at a wedding.

Despite her deep-seated fear of the masculine gender, Thérèse did bring a new emphasis on feminine theology that finds its roots in her namesake. The paradox of this message coming from someone in a convent is worth noting, but does not completely remove the message she brought—an emphasis on love and an independent-thinking, feminine attitude.

#### **10. Shift to Women Teachers**

The history of “Doctors of the Church” began with Pope Gelasius and later Gregory the Great. By the time of Vatican II, only 30 had been given this honour, all men. Before Vatican II, women were excluded along with all laymen, based on the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 14:34 (KJV): “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak...” It was Pope Paul VI who decided to confront this centuries-old tradition. In order to confidently confront the criticism he would surely face, he required a lengthy theological study. Four distinguished theologians decided in favour of changing this Church tradition. For the Church to make this proclamation, it first had to accept the idea of “progressive revelation.”<sup>382</sup> So, on September 27 and October 4, 1970, Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Sienna were declared Doctors of the Church.

John-Paul II required more research on the subject, and the result was the stating of six requirements necessary to be honoured as Doctor of the Church, announced prior to the declaration of Thérèse of Lisieux as Doctor.<sup>383</sup> There were some minor difficulties in terms of Thérèse’s acceptance. A delicate balance had to be found between faithfulness to doctrine and new illumination concerning old doctrines. The focus of her contribution was in the area of love, as the Pope described a few weeks after her declaration: “La théologie sapientielle de sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus montre le chemin principal de toute réflexion théologique et de toute recherche doctrinal : l’amour dont ‘dépendent la Loi et les

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<sup>381</sup> Noel O’Donoghue, 130.

<sup>382</sup> Cervera, *L’apport théologique de sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus, docteur de l’Eglise*, 30.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid, 32-34.

prophètes' est un amour qui tend à la vérité et c'est ainsi qu'il reste un amour authentique envers Dieu et envers l'homme."<sup>384</sup>

There are a few remarkable events concerning this declaration, the first taking place even before Thérèse was declared a Doctor. With the rewriting of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in 1992, she was quoted in the last statement concerning merit. The old definition of merit, earning one's way to heaven, was done away with, according to the words in her Sacrifice to Merciful Love: "La charité de Christ est en nous la source de tous nos mérites devant Dieu."<sup>385</sup> The quote from Thérèse follows.<sup>386</sup> Second, she was the youngest person ever to be declared Doctor of the Church and the closest chronologically to our day.<sup>387</sup> Finally, one can see a dramatic doctrinal shift in the Church as women, who had always been excluded as priests and still are, were now seen as teachers of the Church, experts in doctrine and voices to speak to the Church with new illumination on old doctrinal ideas. This last change within the Catholic Church reflects some of the ideas that were put forth in Vatican II. It perhaps does not go far enough for some who wish to see women priests, but perhaps that is something the Catholic Church will address in this twenty-first century.

### 11. Shift to Nihilism

One major shift that became visible post-Vatican II is Guittou's emphasis on Thérèse's last months of despair: "Elle est devenue athée, elle connaît le désespoir—le goût amer, l'attrait et l'horreur du néant."<sup>388</sup> For her to say that she no longer believed in eternal life, that there was no heaven, that death brought nothingness, was a radical step away from Catholic doctrine. Thérèse is compared to many great thinkers and, of course, to Paul. Her atheistic despair is reflected positively by these other philosophers: "Si à ma mort je voyais clairement que le néant m'attend et que toutes les croyances soient frappées d'illusion, je ne regretterais pas le moins du monde de m'être trompé dans ma vie et d'avoir cru à la vérité du christianisme, car c'est l'amour infini qui aurait tort de ne pas exister, et non pas moi d'avoir cru en lui."<sup>389</sup> This new philosophical twist echoes some of the ideology of the twentieth century, but is far from Paul, whose emphasis was clearly on the reality of heaven and not the possibility that he might have been wrong. In fact, concerning the resurrection of Christ, he said that if he was wrong, "...we are of all men most to be pitied." (1 Corinthians 15:19 RSV)

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<sup>384</sup> Cervera, *L'apport théologique de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, docteur de l'Eglise*, 37-38.

<sup>385</sup> *Catéchisme de l'Eglise Catholique*. (Paris: Mame/Plon, 1992), 416.

<sup>386</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*, Prayer 6, 963. Cited by *Catéchisme de l'Eglise Catholique*.

<sup>387</sup> Cervera, *L'apport théologique de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, docteur de l'Eglise*, 39.

<sup>388</sup> Jean Guittou, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 45.



In the *Conférence du Centenaire*, Guy Gaucher focuses on the last 18 months of Thérèse's life. He describes these final months as an "épreuve de la foi,"<sup>390</sup> and documents well the issue of testing both in her writings and critical events. The focus of this trial was that she believed she was damned, according to Gaucher, who actually follows the thinking of Piat<sup>391</sup> For Thomas Nevin, the central point is her fear that there simply is no heaven.<sup>392</sup> For Gaucher, Thérèse fought against all of the temptations that assailed her. While she accepted the testing, she also fought to remain faithful. Up to this point, his ideas accurately reflect Thérésian thought.

The main text, according to Gaucher, is the Manuscript C, the last text Thérèse wrote. He uses many quotations and highlights the view that her ideas were primarily existential; one must live through the same things in order to understand. The most notable change in this manuscript is her comprehension that she is a sinner. All of her life she feared sin, but now she saw herself as a sinner. She experienced the nothingness that is the fate of all sinners, "la mort prochaine ne lui apporterait que le néant."<sup>393</sup> For Gaucher, the most important idea is that Thérèse battled doubt, since she stated that she had done more acts of faith in the last months than in her whole life. In not greatly modifying her thinking, he presents an accurate Thérésian view.

One comment by Gaucher brings some light to Thérèse's struggle, from a psychological point of view, that it might have come simply from the weakening of her body.<sup>394</sup> It is obvious, but merits stating: the weakness of her body, the incredible pain, surely contributed to the spiritual darkness that invaded her soul.

Some of the anguish of these last months was related to the atheism of her day. This can be seen in her cousin's husband, René Tostain, an avowed atheist. Her uncle Guérin made it clear that her cousin's atheism was part of the battle of the time. According to Gaucher, the entire reason for her 18 months of struggle was rooted in the culture of the day: "Tous ces faits montrent que l'épreuve thérésienne s'enracina dans son époque."<sup>395</sup> Here one can see the great significance of the influence of one's culture. Even in this darkness, she was aware of her final victory, according to Gaucher. In one breath, she spoke

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<sup>389</sup> Jean Guitton, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 46.

<sup>390</sup> Guy Gaucher. "La passion de Thérèse ou l'épreuve de la foi." *Conférence du Centenaire*, 53.

<sup>391</sup> Stéphane-Joseph Piat, *Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux*, 221. Cited by Guy Gaucher, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 64.

<sup>392</sup> Nevin, 301.

<sup>393</sup> Guy Gaucher, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 71.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid*, 74, 76-77.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

of heaven being closed, and then later talked about how happy she would be there. This is an obvious paradox during her months of grave illness: hope mixed with despair.

Noel O'Donoghue examines carefully the last months of Thérèse's life and the desperate darkness that engulfed her. He compares her to men like Sartre and Heidegger, who also struggled but were unable to overcome or invade it with light: "This is what Thérèse did; this is why she shines like a star across the darkest seas of our epoch."<sup>396</sup> His praise is effusive; still, his point is valid in that her battle with pain and suffering brought hope to many.

O'Donoghue goes beyond the cultural implications of her day in an effort to create piety unrelated to her work. In this season of night, "she had to support the faith of the whole world as it surrounded her in her enclosed convent...More and more she is the one source of light...ever more profoundly so as she sinks ever more deeply into physical dissolution and total inner darkness."<sup>397</sup> He embellishes her contribution here by giving her the role of carrying the faith of the world.

Gaucher goes on to describe Thérèse's suffering as that of a martyr, which would agree with the comments of Piat and others. Thérèse's final thought, according to Gaucher, was that the suffering she had endured would be redemptive: "Elle affirme le sens rédempteur de ses épreuves."<sup>398</sup> Gaucher also connects this idea of suffering to Isaiah 53. As has been said previously, her use of this text does not reflect the full theological meaning given it in our time.

## 12. Shift to the Superiority of the Human

Jean-François Six's focus is also on the last 18 months of Thérèse's life. He emphasises the cultural context of atheism, making 1870 the watershed moment in the effort of atheists to turn the children of France away from God.<sup>399</sup> He also speaks of the paradox that she experienced in identifying with the non-believers, as well as her ongoing battle of faith. Where Six moves into creative territory is in stating Thérèse's existential identity with unbelievers. There is no question that she struggled with the atheism of her day, but not to the level that he asserts. Six takes this relationship one step further, indicating his real direction, by stating that the mystical night was not one of identification with God, but with the people of her time. She did not "précipitée dans la nuit mystique du seul à seul devant Dieu, mais

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<sup>396</sup> Noel O'Donoghue, 123.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>398</sup> Guy Gaucher, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 80.

<sup>399</sup> E.-G. Hervet. Cited by Jean-François Six. "Thérèse de Lisieux et les incroyants." *Conférence du Centenaire*, 156.



qui a vécu dans un cheminement de solidarité avec les hommes de son temps..."<sup>400</sup> Thérèse certainly prayed for the lost, but to say that she truly identified with them would be going too far. It would have been impossible for her, with her upbringing in her family of origin and in the confines of Carmel, to identify with the thinking of the French atheists of her time.

Six then progresses beyond Thérèse by stating that she, with the atheists, accepted the greatness of humans. By confronting this atheism and by her solidarity with humanity, Six asserts that she prophetically opened the third mystical period of the Church.<sup>401</sup> He then links this to the statements of Paul VI at Vatican II, that the Church could learn from the unbelievers of her day.<sup>402</sup> Here Six has far surpassed anything Thérèse would have envisioned. Her burden for the lost cannot in any way be interpreted, as Six suggests, to have ushered in a third period of mysticism. He creates a piety completely unrelated to her work.

Although, in a sense, the Church did learn from the atheists of the twentieth century that it should allow people to worship in freedom, this was unrelated to Thérèse's life or writings. Her identification with the lost was to see their salvation, not to learn from them. Six offers no documentation for his statement that she ushered in a third period of mystical piety or that she was the one to foresee the great theological shift of Vatican II in the attitude of the Church toward non-believers.

### **13. Shift to Active Ministry**

How does the Carmelite tradition fit into the modern world, that is, the twenty-first century? Noel O'Donoghue notes the ongoing tension between ministry to the world and the life of contemplation and prayer, and criticises modern universities as "factories of professional studies"<sup>403</sup> where engineers, lawyers, and teachers are created without understanding the needs of society. His answer to this humanistic trend in today's culture is a return to the cloister in order to "counterbalance this terrifying dehumanisation of the human."<sup>404</sup>

O'Donoghue is partially correct in stating that the problem today is the dehumanisation of humanity, but that is only part of the problem. To return to the cloister could be seen by some Catholics as part of the solution, but only in a limited sense. For too many and for too long the cloister has been a place to hide from the world. In Thérèse's time, people did not enter the cloister to change the world, but to flee

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<sup>400</sup> Jean-François Six, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 163.

<sup>401</sup> The first period would be the mystical life of the desert through the fourth century, and the second period would be from then until Thérèse.

<sup>402</sup> Jean-François Six, *Conférence du Centenaire*, 165.

<sup>403</sup> Noel O'Donoghue, 135.

from it. Even as late as Thomas Merton, his entry into the cloister was seen as an escape. The Catholic Church through Vatican II tried to change that impression, as can be seen in the decision to change the title nuns to sisters. The cloister is not a solution for the needs of the world, unless it is a momentary rest from noise. During the late twentieth century, one can find in Mother Theresa of Calcutta (beatified in October 2003) a genuine example of selfless love—a life of service. In Mother Theresa, not in the words of O'Donoghue, one can see a return to the Core Piety of Christ.

## CONCLUSION

The changes in the definition of sanctity and the requirements for becoming a saint have shown that holiness is not a static subject. In particular, in the life of Thérèse, one can point to a vast change which took place from the nineteenth-century views and practices of sanctity to the early twenty-first century practices of sanctity. The swing from Mother Marie de Gonzague (Mother Superior when Thérèse entered the convent) to Mother Theresa of Calcutta clearly illustrates this. Thérèse of Lisieux served as a bridge, or catalyst, from the old traditions of Jansenistic legalism and works-righteousness to a friendlier sanctity of relationship.

### a. Changing Doctrine

It appears, however, that Catholic theologians in search of a reason to change, their own traditions locking them into medieval ideas that no longer serve the Church and perhaps never did, have exaggerated Thérèse's role.

To understand Thérèse's influence, one must ask what led to changes in holiness in the previous century. It appears that they were made possible by the Church's acceptance of existential theology. Through this avenue, Thérèse was able to redefine what was holy, and through her existential theology and prophetic role, along with the influence of many others, the Church accepted her teaching. Why were these new doctrines received? The Church was forced by modernity to adapt itself to contemporary society. Catholic Piety has been in many ways imprinted by the culture of the modern world.

One such example is the teaching on limbo; although not related to sanctity, it does show a doctrinal shift in the Church. The Baltimore Catechism No. 3 (1949) states without reservation: "Persons, such as infants, who have not committed actual sin and who, through no fault of theirs, die without baptism, cannot enter heaven; but it is the common belief they will go to some place similar to limbo,

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<sup>404</sup> Noel O'Donoghue, 135.



where they will be free from suffering, though deprived of the happiness of heaven.”<sup>405</sup> The previous quotation is actually a paraphrase. The Baltimore Catechism states: “Children should be baptised as soon as possible because Baptism is necessary for salvation. Infants who die without baptism of any kind do not suffer the punishments of those who die in mortal sin. They may enjoy a certain natural happiness, but they will not enjoy the supernatural happiness of heaven.”<sup>406</sup> Limbo is described elsewhere: “The just among the dead could not enter heaven until Christ satisfied for man’s sin and repaired its injuries. They awaited their redemption in limbo.”<sup>407</sup> Gerald Fagin concludes, and I agree, that views on this subject have changed: “Nowhere in the current catechism is there any treatment of a belief that was part of the common teaching of the church for over 700 years...”<sup>408</sup> Solid teachings of the Church have evolved, this being only one example that has occurred since Vatican II.

#### **b. Core Piety**

We have spoken of three kinds of sanctity or piety in this chapter: Core, Culturally Related and Created. If it is true that some elements of doctrine related to holiness or sanctity are core in nature, then it is indispensable to discover them. Apparently, the Catholic Church has cast aside the doctrine of limbo and diminished purgatory. Clearly, limbo is not supported by scripture and, as a Protestant, I would say the same is true of purgatory. Is it appropriate to give Thérèse all of the credit for this theological shift towards grace and away from legalism? Absolutely not! Many other writers and theologians have contributed to this change in Catholic thinking, especially early Protestants such as Luther. However, Thérèse has served as the focal point for those who needed a reason to change Catholic doctrine. To truly be free, she would, in my opinion, have had to leave the convent, but then she would likely have never been canonised and, in all probability, would not have been declared Doctor of the Church.

All of Thérèse’s work was deeply imprinted by the culture of her day, which could probably be said of every person at every time in the history of the world. One cannot extricate oneself from one’s culture except perhaps by great struggle. Moreover, even if one recognises even a brief glimpse of one’s own culture and biases, one is still influenced by the same. For this reason, I would call the work of Thérèse, with its innovations, Culturally Related Piety, which moved her towards the core of holiness in the areas of love, intimate relationship with God and personal responsibility, but which was still

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<sup>405</sup> Gerald M. Fagin. “Whatever Happened to Limbo?” *America*, Vol. 186, Issue 9, (March 18, 2002), p. 15.

<sup>406</sup> *A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, Revised Edition of the Baltimore Catechism: A Text for Secondary Schools and Colleges No. 3*, (Patterson, New Jersey: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1949), 264.

<sup>407</sup> *A Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, 70.

overshadowed by the legalistic roots of her childhood. In Thérèse's defence, one could say that the perfectionism of her day was an overwhelming force that was felt by all.

Thérèse helped to redefine sanctity in the twentieth century, particularly amongst Roman Catholics. She cannot receive exclusive recognition, but she has been instrumental, without doubt, in altering popular opinions about holiness. No longer is it something only available to the extremely pious, but also to the average Catholic. In redefining holiness at the close of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church has attempted to make it more attainable, more easily identifiable for their constituents. By naming so many new saints during his tenure, John Paul II reinvigorated interest in the saints and in some ways brought revival to the Catholic Church. Was this the best method by which to revive the Catholic Church? Most Protestants would say no, which leads us to the next subject: holiness in the world of Pentecostalism.

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<sup>408</sup> Gerald M. Fagin, 15.



## **PART II – HOLINESS IN WILLIAM J. SEYMOUR**

In Part II of this work, the focus of attention will be the Pentecostal Church and holiness as communicated by William J. Seymour. Chapter 5 will highlight the cultural and religious setting of the nineteenth century that laid the foundation for the Pentecostal events of the twentieth century.

### **CHAPTER 5 – THE SETTING OF NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICAN PENTECOSTALISM**

#### **SECTION 1 – THE METHODIST CENTURY**

During the time of the American Revolution, Methodism was a small, hardly recognisable group. By 1820, however, the Methodists matched the size and growth of the Baptist movement in America. From 1855 to 1865 the Methodists grew from 1.57 million to 2.0 million adherents, adding over 400,000 converts in only 10 years. This incredible increase motivated some to refer to the nineteenth century of American history as “the Methodist Age in America.”<sup>409</sup> The next largest group, the Baptists, grew by over 250,000 members. Combined these two groups accounted for 70 percent of American Protestants.

Therefore, I believe that in order to understand the religious setting in the United States during the nineteenth century one must examine primarily the rise of the Methodist Church, particularly since there is a direct connection historically and doctrinally between Pentecostals and Methodists. Before we can examine the growth and influence of the Methodist Church in the nineteenth century, however, we must first examine the foundation of the key revival movements prior to this time.

#### **I. PRE-NINETEENTH CENTURY**

##### **A. THE FIRST MODERN *GLOSSOLALIA***

The first evidence of the Charismatic gifts during the modern era occurred in the Scottish Presbyterian Church. Edward Irving, pastor of the Regents Square Presbyterian Church, encouraged a Charismatic Renewal in 1830-1831, an event that actually began in the Campbell family of Port Glasgow. Margaret Campbell was terminally ill when her friend James MacDonald declared that she should “arise up and walk,”<sup>410</sup> and she did. Soon thereafter MacDonald sent a letter to Mary Campbell, who was dying

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<sup>409</sup> Winthrop S. Hudson. “The Methodist Age in America,” *Methodist History* 12 (April 197): 11. Cited by Donald Dayton. *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*. (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987), 64.

<sup>410</sup> His statement is adapted from Matthew 9.5.

of lung disease, proclaiming her healing as well. On February 1, 1830, she fell into a trance and began speaking in unknown tongues. She too was restored to health, and soon there was a thriving prayer meeting in Port Glasgow.

News quickly spread to Pastor Edward Irving, who gave his blessing to Mary Campbell's meetings. She then travelled to London, where the *charismata* or spiritual gifts were displayed in the Sunday morning services. With over 2,000 in attendance, it is no surprise that conflicts arose from these manifestations! Irving was ejected from his church and formed another in London, on Newman Street.<sup>411</sup> Since that time small groups claimed to speak in tongues throughout the nineteenth century.

## **B. THE FOUNDATION OF METHODISM AND JOHN WESLEY (1703-1791)**

Although, in my opinion, the first evidence of spiritual gifts can be found in the Scottish Presbyterian Church with Edward Irving, and even possibly before him, the origins of the Pentecostal movement are still hotly debated. There have been countless lengthy discussions and intense debates on who holds the rightful claim. Scholars have traced the beginnings of Pentecostalism to various traditions: Roman Catholicism, Puritanism and German Pietism. Although influences can be found within these various traditions, Vinson Synan matter-of-factly states: "In historical perspective the Pentecostal movement was the child of the Holiness movement, which in turn was a child of Methodism."<sup>412</sup> Every historical scholar should recognise the fundamental influence of the Holiness movement on Pentecostalism and, by inference, the influence of John Wesley. The reason this is so is due to the fact that almost all of the early leaders of the movement advocated sanctification as the "second work of grace," with the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a third blessing accompanied by the evidence of speaking in tongues. More will be said on this matter later. Suffice to say, the strongest historical evidence connects Pentecostalism to the Holiness movement and, before that, to Methodism. Often, however, research discontinues at this point, as if Wesley created the idea of holiness *ex-nihilo*. We will press further into history in our search for the roots of Pentecostalism.

Academic works about Wesley typically refer to three authors who influenced his early theological formation: Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor and William Law. In addition, there was a notable group of Catholic writers who birthed Wesley's holiness theology: "Reading late at night and

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<sup>411</sup> Stanley Burgess, Ed M. Van der Maas. *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 2002), 1189.

<sup>412</sup> Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1997), 106.



early in the morning, he devoured the writings of Clement of Alexandria, Plotinus, Augustine, the Cambridge Platonists, Molinas, Madam Guyon, Francois de Sales, Fenelon, and Pascal.”<sup>413</sup> Hollenweger describes Wesley’s doctrine of perfection as coming particularly from Lorenzo Scopuli, Henry Scougal, Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, William Law, Gregor Lopez, and Jean-Baptiste de Renty.<sup>414</sup>

In his early years, he greatly valued the primitive church, seeing the early church fathers as the most accurate reflection of Apostolic traditions. In his sermons one finds a hierarchy of value, beginning with those in the second century: Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Ignatius of Antioch. Then, in the third century one finds Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Tertullian, and Origen. Based on this hierarchy of declining wisdom, Wesley viewed the miraculous gifts as present in the centuries up to the reign of Constantine, the first century being the purest in doctrine. One example of Wesley’s application of Patristic thinking was how laypersons could function in the prophetic but not the priestly roles, wrongly blaming Constantine for the decline of the prophetic. After Constantine, Wesley found value in the works of some post-Nicene fathers such as Basil, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, Ephraem Syrus, and [Pseudo] Macarius. Neil Anderson shows a strong connection between Wesley and Clement of Alexandria as the only church father: “...he specifically cites as inspiring something he wrote...”<sup>415</sup> Wesley was known to carefully select what he valued from the various ancient writers, including only those ideas that agreed with his theology.

In later years, Wesley gained a more realistic view of the early fathers, recognising that corruption in the Church did not begin with Constantine but had its start much earlier. His pessimism of the Patristics grew, as did his value of historical progress.<sup>416</sup> Ted Campbell states that a simple comparison of Wesley and the Patristics is not sufficient. One must rather perform “a systematic consideration of all the likely sources for such an influence... The quest for ancient influences on Wesley, then, is methodologically perilous, and likely to shed relatively little light on Wesley himself.”<sup>417</sup> Here Campbell’s caution concerning methodology is important when one desires to locate influences so distant in time: similarity of thought does not necessarily imply dependence.

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<sup>413</sup> Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 15.

<sup>414</sup> Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 146.

<sup>415</sup> Neil Anderson, *A Definitive Study of Evidence Concerning John Wesley’s Appropriation of the Thought of Clement of Alexandria*. (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), 75.

<sup>416</sup> Ted Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1991), 46-52.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

To understand Wesley's emphasis on the early church fathers, one must see it in context, namely, the Church of England. Men such as Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) and John Jewel (1522-1572) greatly emphasised the church fathers. By using the church fathers and scripture, they laid a foundation for the Protestant perspective on "ministerial authority, marriage, scripture, the sacraments, justification...the Virgin Mary, and liturgy in the vernacular of the people."<sup>418</sup> Richard Hooker (1554-1660) added to this the tools of reason. Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) is well known for his emphasis on personal devotion in the Anglican Church, although he also greatly valued the primitive church. Other great scholars of the Patristics were influential in the Anglican Church, such as John Pearson (1613-1686), William Beveridge (1637-1708) and John Potter (1674-1747). Beveridge's commentary on the *Thirty-Nine Articles* indicates a heavy reliance by the Church of England on the Greek and Latin fathers.

Most likely, one can also find the influence of the Cambridge Platonists, John Norris and John Smith, who influenced Wesley's moral law. Wesley surely read much of Norris' works while at Oxford. His understanding of John Smith came through a study of Henry Scougal. Several in this group were included in his Christian Library: John Worthington, Ralph Cudworth, Henry More, Nathanael Culverwel, Simon Patrick, and John Smith<sup>419</sup> Phrases such as "eternal reason" and "the fitness of things" probably came from the Cambridge Platonists and their understanding of right and wrong not as part of human law but as God's eternal moral law. Wesley's *A Christian Library* was an interesting mixture of Anglicans, who were very dominant, Cambridge Platonists, Roman Catholics, Pietists, and Puritans.<sup>420</sup>

Richard Brantley endeavours to connect Wesley to the empirical philosophy of John Locke (1632-1704): "that the experiential emphasis of his theology derives, in large measure, from the experiential emphasis of Locke."<sup>421</sup> Brantley's arguments focus largely on the philosophical methods of Wesley's theology. Although the issue of experiential theology is important, unfortunately Brantley's claim exceeds the scope of this work; however, it should be noted that his arguments are convincing.

It was through reading Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation*, Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, Robert Nelson's *The Practice of True Devotion*, and William Beveridge's *Private Thoughts Upon Religion* that Wesley began to move away from his German spiritual foundation. In 1725, he started to view holiness as the focus of true religion. Add to the aforementioned group William Law, and one

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<sup>418</sup> Neil Anderson, 12

<sup>419</sup> Kenneth Collins, 158.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid, 174.

<sup>421</sup> Richard Brantley. *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism*. (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1984), 2.



understands Wesley's emphasis on holiness, or sanctification. In addition to à Kempis, Taylor and Law, there were a substantial number of Western and Anglican influences: John Norris, Bishop Browne, Bishop Atterbury, Anthony Horneck, Francis Hutcheson, Samuel Clarke, Bishop George Bull, and Fénelon.<sup>422</sup>

Wesley's conversion experience in 1738 brought him to the realisation that his quest for holiness would not come by his own works but by God's grace. His salvation story is commonly known and need not be repeated here, but it is worth noting that his quest for holiness now became an effort of faith not works. Prior to his conversion, one cannot overstate the influence of William Law, for it was afterwards that Wesley aggressively questioned this mentor for not explaining the way of faith. Late in life (1788), Wesley restated the value of Law's writings, but the decades in between were not so warm. The letters of May 19 and 20 (1738) and later indicate a direct confrontation over Law's failure to show Wesley the way of faith.<sup>423</sup> Law responded that the blame could easily be placed at the feet of others. Following this string of letters, they did not speak or correspond again for nearly 20 years. This great divide was a result of the issue of salvation by grace through faith. For Law and all the Divines, salvation was to be "made like Christ."<sup>424</sup> In this area, Wesley was influenced by the Reformers' doctrine of grace and faith. Man could not by his own effort accomplish salvation: "Neither our repentance nor amendment can be any satisfaction for sin. It is only 'through his blood that we have redemption' ... Nor is there any more sure way to the imitation of Christ than faith in Christ crucified..."<sup>425</sup>

Between 1749 and 1755, 50 volumes of Wesley's *Christian Library* were produced, including extracts from "*The Homilies of Macarius*, the *Spiritual Guide* of Molinos... letters of Fénelon, Brother Lawrence's *Practice of the Presence of God*, and other mystical treatises."<sup>426</sup> Wesley also praised Madam Guyon, with reservation, printing extracts of her work as well. Even in the area of science, Wesley was well read. His eclectic nature would surprise most Evangelicals, particularly his interest in Roman Catholics, but it is important to note that he collected his theology, reasoning and practice from a multiplicity of sources. For this reason, one cannot claim that he relied solely on one individual. To do so would be a grave misrepresentation of his broad perspective.

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<sup>422</sup> Kenneth Collins, 42.

<sup>423</sup> John Wesley's letter to William Law, dated May 20, 1738. Cited by J. B. Green, 70.

<sup>424</sup> J. B. Green, 143.

<sup>425</sup> *Wesley's Works*, vol. IX, pp. 489-90. Cited by J.B. Green, 146-147.

<sup>426</sup> J.B. Green, 184.

Understanding this vast influence from Wesley's extensive reading, one can nonetheless conclude that the strong persuasion in terms of his emphasis on personal holiness came from à Kempis, Taylor and Law. Although Collins lists many influences, he credits these three men as providing the primary foundation for Wesley's doctrine of sanctification.<sup>427</sup> One can find their thoughts in Wesley's doctrine of sanctification and other matters as far back as Clement of Alexandria, but I would contend that Thomas à Kempis played a dominant role. More will be said of this later.

Wesley tended to be more Anglo-Catholic<sup>428</sup> than Protestant in his views, greatly influenced by Arminianism, as are most Pentecostals. The worldwide missions emphasis of Pentecostals is predicated on the belief that *all* can be saved.

Another great source of information about Wesley's formative years is his journals and letters, which were primarily written to his mother. The letters demonstrate that he was contemplating a holy life after reading both Taylor and à Kempis, who motivated Wesley to become concerned for his inner holiness with "...the subjection of all thoughts, feelings and action to the pattern of Christ..."<sup>429</sup> William Law's influence followed. Later, Wesley's doctrine was deeply impacted by his contact with the Moravians. While he eventually split from them for reasons of doctrine, justification by faith (something he was taught by them) became one of his key tenants. When he was converted "by faith" on May 24, 1738, Wesley began to question his previous "works" righteousness. He continued to hold to the doctrine of justification by faith as time passed, but focused his attention on the importance of sanctification.

Interestingly, Evangelicals highlight the 1738 date, while writers of Catholic persuasion refer to the conversion-like experience in 1725 under the influence of Taylor and à Kempis. Rack correctly concludes that, as regards holiness or sanctification, Wesley was more influenced by Catholic than Protestant writers. Because of his emphasis on Catholic writers and works, some Moravians and Calvinists even questioned his salvation. Both William Law and Jeremy Taylor were Anglicans; Thomas à Kempis was a Roman Catholic. Following, these three will be reviewed in reverse chronological order.

### **1. William Law**

It is well known that John Wesley and some of his friends belonged to the "Holy Club." As a group, they asked William Law to be their counsellor. One can understand why Wesley would be attracted

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<sup>427</sup> Kenneth Collins, 200.

<sup>428</sup> This phrase, though not used until the nineteenth century, accurately describes the idea that Wesley was closer at times to Roman Catholic ideology than to the Protestant reformers.

<sup>429</sup> Henry Rack. *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 73.



to Law's writings: "He, therefore, is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God; who considers God in everything, who serves God in everything..."<sup>430</sup> Law encouraged regular hours and times for prayer, as well as the content of prayer: singing psalms in the morning, meditating on humility at 9 a.m. and on love at noon, and so forth; an unmistakable emphasis on the need for holiness, or perfection as he called it, was to be pursued above all else.

Wesley's diary entries in December of 1726 indicate that he began a study of William Law's books, said to have been the driving force behind Wesley's ethical activism.<sup>431</sup> Equally important was the Arminian emphasis on experiential sanctification. For Law, sanctification meant conforming one's life to that of Christ and bearing one's cross. This required a death to the world's ways, which resulted in a new life of the Spirit. Another significant influence from Law was an emphasis on love, both for God and one's neighbour, for it was through love that true sanctification could be seen. According to William Law, the works of Christ were not emphasised; rather, living the life of Christ was key. One additional observation: Law had a strongly ascetic leaning, which Wesley did not always follow. His influence was nonetheless very significant in Wesley's journey to perfection:

A year or two after, Mr. Law's "Christian Perfection" and "Serious Call" were put into my hands. These convinced me, more than ever, of the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian; and I determined, through his grace (the absolute necessity of which I was deeply sensible of) to be all devoted to God, to give him all my soul, my body and my substance.<sup>432</sup>

## 2. Jeremy Taylor

Prior to Law's writings, Wesley became familiar with those of Jeremy Taylor, in particular, *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Holy Dying*, considered by Kenneth Collins to be replete with both simplicity and seriousness. From Taylor, Wesley learned the importance of purity of intentions and a complete devotion to God, and was quite rigorous: "...there were twenty-three rules for employment of time; ten for directing the intention; and eight for signs of purity of intention among several others." What Wesley disliked about Taylor was his lack of assurance concerning salvation. He thus reconsidered his early German formation and realised that Christianity was not only about external actions but also an

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<sup>430</sup> William Law. *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life: Adapted to the State and Condition of All Orders of Christians*. The Classics of Western Spirituality. (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 47.

<sup>431</sup> Harold Lindstrom. *Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation*. (London: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, 1946), 13, 16.

<sup>432</sup> Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1978), 11:367. Cited by Kenneth Collins. *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 41.

inward transformation, “especially in terms of devotion and dedication to God.”<sup>433</sup> From Taylor, therefore, Wesley primarily learned the importance of intention.

### 3. Thomas à Kempis

It was around this same time that Wesley came across a work by Thomas à Kempis, recording that he read the works of Taylor in 1725 and à Kempis in 1726. He was deeply moved, although he complained in a letter to his mother that à Kempis was, at times, too harsh. Wesley rejected the idea that one should be continuously miserable in the world, stating, in contrast, that one should find joy and peace. It was via this correspondence that his mother Suzanna helped her son to separate the wheat from the chaff and see the value of rules and discipline in the Christian life. Wesley’s father Samuel also encouraged him to consider the worth of personal mortification.

Concerning à Kempis, Wesley wrote in 1766: “The nature and extent of inward religion, the religion of the heart, now appeared to me in a stronger light than ever it had done before. I saw that giving even all my life to God... would profit me nothing, unless I gave my heart, yea, all my heart to Him.”<sup>434</sup> à Kempis laid the foundation for Wesley—that true religion “begins with the transformation of the heart, with the alteration of the tempers of the deepest recesses of our being.”<sup>435</sup>

Certainly, all three authors profoundly impacted Wesley, but Thomas à Kempis was amongst the first, and, in my opinion, had a lasting affect. Late in life, Wesley chose to translate chapters of à Kempis’ *The Imitation of Christ*, which was first published in 1770. He took selections from all four sections and translated the majority of à Kempis’ renowned work. Concerning love, Wesley chose these words: “Love...complaineth not of impossibility; for it thinketh all things possible...It is therefore able to undertake all things...”<sup>436</sup> This was also one of the most quoted passages by Thérèse of Lisieux: “Jamais l’Amour ne trouve d’impossibilités, parce qu’il se croit tout possible et tout permis.”<sup>437</sup> Although the translation is slightly different, the idea is similar and clearly comes from the same passage.

Many other examples could be given where Thérèse used a passage that can also be found in Wesley’s selected devotional readings. For example, she commonly quoted à Kempis’ statement: “Aimez

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<sup>433</sup> Kenneth Collins, 34, 35.

<sup>434</sup> John Wesley. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. (Ennis, Texas: J. H. Padgett & Co., 1889), 184.

<sup>435</sup> Collins, 33.

<sup>436</sup> John Wesley. *The Christian’s Pattern: An extract of The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis*. (New York: Abingdon Press, Reprinted 1954), 57, Book III, 5, 4.

<sup>437</sup> St. Thérèse de Lisieux. *Œuvres Complètes*. (2004), 158. Manuscript A, 53v°, *The Imitation*, Book III, 5, 4.



à être ignore et compté pour rien.”<sup>438</sup> In Wesley’s translation, one reads: “If thou wilt know anything profitably, love to be unknown, and of no account.”<sup>439</sup>

While an exhaustive comparison of the writings of à Kempis as found in Wesley and Thérèse of Lisieux is not possible here, it appears reasonable to conclude that he had a primary influence in both of their lives as regards holiness. For Thérèse, his influence began in early childhood; for Wesley, it was during his early twenties, a turning point when he began to strive for perfection. It is therefore plausible to view Thomas à Kempis as the foundation for the holiness practiced by both of these reformers.

Obviously, there were many other influences in the lives of John Wesley and Thérèse of Lisieux. For Wesley, the doctrine of justification by faith and his salvation experience were fundamental as well. Sanctification was another key aspect. Still, when addressing the issue of holiness, the impact of Thomas à Kempis is notable when one considers that Wesley chose to translate most of à Kempis’ well-known work so that his followers could also benefit.

When Methodism came to America, John Wesley insisted on the same message, both in doctrine and discipline, in this new land. This is evident in the organising of American Methodism, as noted by Kenneth Brown: “When American Methodism formally organised in 1784, the ‘Christmas Conference’ adopted Wesley’s forty-four sermons, his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* and the *Twenty-four Articles*...as the doctrinal standards.”<sup>440</sup> After Wesley, one must examine the various revival movements in the history of America to understand the growth of the Methodist movement and its ultimate preparation for the Pentecostalism.

### C. THE FIRST GREAT AWAKENING

Christine Heyrman, historian at the University of Delaware, credits William Tennent for the spark of the First Great Awakening. One should also add Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, who were perhaps more recognised.

Jonathan Edwards was born on October 5, 1703, in East Windsor, Conneticut, and is best known for his sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” There was a tremendous outpouring of God’s spirit in response to his preaching; however, because of his harsh rebukes he lost his church and was eventually exiled to work in Stockbridge, ministering mostly to the Indians. This was also where he accomplished most of his significant writing. Another contributing voice during the Great Awakening was

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<sup>438</sup> *Œuvres Complètes*. 470. Letter 145. *The Imitation*, Book I, 2, 3.

<sup>439</sup> John Wesley. *The Christian’s Pattern*, 12.

George Whitefield, a friend of both Edwards and Wesley, although he and Wesley parted company over the issue of predestination and free will. Whitefield stressed the need for conversion and was such a powerful preacher that thousands could hear him without any amplification system. Other ministers also supported the Awakening, but at times extremes caused some pastors to shy away.

## **II. NINETEENTH-CENTURY REVIVALISM**

It is unlikely that one could overemphasise the importance of the revivals in nineteenth-century American history. The earliest great movement towards revival at that time was the Second Great Awakening.

### **A. THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING**

Although the revival actually began with James McGready in Logan County, Kentucky, it was Cane Ridge (1801) that became the most famous. Gatherings of 10,000 to 25,000 people are still considered impressive today, but even more so when one realises that the largest city in the State, Lexington, then had less than 2,000 inhabitants! Because people travelled such long distances, the revivalists would usually press for an immediate decision. Conversion was often emotional with shouting, weeping, jerking, and barking.

The Methodists and Baptists, however, were not ashamed of the emotional outbursts and grew in an extraordinary fashion in the coming years. In terms of American holiness, one must view emotional outbursts, physical jerking and spasms as part of the tradition. Some groups would reject this emotionalism, but at the time most accepted it, as the emotional element was proof of conversion.

Charles G. Finney remains one of the most outstanding voices of this period. Finney's revivals in Utica, New York, in 1826, argued against the Calvinism of the day, which stated that God controlled the destiny of each person. Finney argued that each person was a free moral agent with the ability to choose salvation. His greatest success was in Rochester, New York, 1830-1831. The new revivalist techniques popularised by Finney and others, with lingering meetings and the "anxious bench," produced incredible growth in church membership.

### **B. OBERLIN PERFECTIONISM**

Finney accepted the position of professor of Theology at the Congregation College in Oberlin, Ohio. The problem of salvation rested in the volition of the hearer, he insisted, who simply needed to

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<sup>440</sup> Kenneth Brown. *Inskip, McDonald, Fowler: "Wholly and Forever Thine."* (Hazleton, PA: Holiness Archives, 1999), 66.



state, "I will believe and be saved."<sup>441</sup> This has been called the "Methodisation" of Calvinism. In 1836, both Finney and Asa Mahan, the president of the College, professed an experience of the second blessing as radical and life changing as the conversion experience.

Finney was influenced by Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, thus it is clear that Methodism left an imprint on the Oberlin revival in 1839, a revival which motivated the students and faculty to live a sanctified life. Older institutions attacked Finney for his emphasis on "free will, revivalism and reform."<sup>442</sup> Yet, despite the criticism his teaching received wide acceptance. Finney worked to blend Wesleyan ideas with what he held to be important in Calvinistic doctrine, although he never strongly supported the "second blessing."

### C. ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT

For many years, the Church was divided on the issue of slavery. Reasons were given on both sides, claiming the authority of God's Word. It wasn't until George Cheever began to openly write on the issue that the voices against slavery became dominant. His argument was that a higher law superseded the laws of the land. Soon the greatest preachers and writers of the day were siding with the anti-slavery movement, including Finney, H.C. Fish and Beecher, to name but a few.

Theologically, the problem developed because the New Testament spoke of slavery with an almost approving nod. In fact, the Old Testament (see Leviticus 25:44-46) gives clear approval for the practice of slavery. Princeton University took this view, siding with the southern preachers, and developed theological arguments in defence of slavery, bringing great harm to the revivalist movement.<sup>443</sup> Most Christians, however, began to see that Christianity had a higher law, a moral law that surpassed human law. Converts to perfectionism found that the "law of love," so dominant in its theology, was violated by slavery. Thus specific groups of Methodists set themselves firmly against the abuse of African Americans. An example of the magnitude of this issue can be seen in the separation of Wesleyan Methodists from the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1843.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>441</sup> Melvin Dieter. *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*. (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980), 21.

<sup>442</sup> Timothy Smith. *Revivalism and Social Reform In Mid-Nineteenth-Century America*. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), 109.

<sup>443</sup> The first mention of the involvement of Princeton in this issue is on page 186 of Smith's book. T. Smith, 219.

<sup>444</sup> Dieter, 25.

### **III. PHOEBE PALMER AND THE LAY REVIVAL**

It is impossible to speak of nineteenth-century American revivalism and not mention Phoebe Worrall Palmer, as well as her husband Dr. Walter C Palmer and sister Sarah Worrall Lankford, all faithful members of the Methodist Church. Phoebe and Walter Palmer are best known for the Tuesday meetings held in their home. It was Sarah who started the meeting for ladies, but Phoebe, obviously a charismatic leader, soon took the prominent role. Ministering only to women until 1839, after which time men were allowed to attend, significant Church leaders, bishops and theologians would come to experience this new brand of holiness. By 1850 the Palmers spent half of the year at camp meetings and then returned home in the winter and spring months so that Dr. Palmer could resume his medical practice. It was widely known that they would not accept compensation for their ministry.

#### **A. ALTAR THEOLOGY**

Phoebe Palmer developed a controversial doctrine known as “altar theology.” In this teaching, Christ was both the sacrifice for sin and the altar upon which it was sacrificed. By offering oneself on the altar of Christ, one could be purged of all sin, based on the scripture that “the altar sanctifieth the gift.” (Matthew 23.19) In addition, she changed the doctrine of sanctification from being primarily an experience to being faith based.

Palmer’s doctrine can be seen as a combination of the previous century’s revivalism with “an impatient, American pragmatism that always seeks to make a reality at the moment whatever is considered at all possible in the future.”<sup>445</sup> Her doctrine was regarded as a shortcut to perfection. The effect of her teachings, attitude and doctrinal views are reminiscent of the work of the Little Flower of Lisieux. Her sacrifice on the altar of Christ and the shortcut to perfection, by faith, cause one to think of Thérèse, but one must remember that Palmer predated her by decades.

#### **B. PHOEBE PALMER’S IMPACT**

Kenneth Brown places Phoebe upon a high pedestal: “In many ways she could be considered the ‘Mother’ of the Holiness movement.”<sup>446</sup> Despite the controversy that surrounded her teachings, he notes that they were eventually accepted into the Methodist Church and the Revival Movement as a whole.

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<sup>445</sup> Dieter, 31.

<sup>446</sup> Kenneth Brown, 71.



Brown's assessment of Palmer is not an exaggeration; Timothy Smith agrees: "No other Christian woman of the century...exerted a comparable influence."<sup>447</sup>

The Tuesday meetings were soon the pattern for all seeking after holiness and a significant influence in the Methodist Church. Following are some of the central issues that Phoebe's work changed in the subsequent decades:

**The Rise of the Testimony:** Public testimony of the work of God's grace in one's life was essential not only to spread the message of holiness, but also to help one retain the grace received. Every revival church of this era required a public testimony of some measure in order to become a member.

**Interdenominational Influence:** There were many well-known Methodist leaders who attended the Tuesday meetings, which is perhaps no surprise. However, there were also leaders from the Congregational, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, and Episcopal Church. Phoebe Palmer believed that all division in the Church could be healed by an emphasis on holiness.

**Emphasis on Lay Ministers:** The Tuesday meetings were held in the homes of laymen; this was a movement that owed its impetus to a force outside of the clergy. None of the three leaders—Phoebe, her husband or her sister—had any theological training. Part of this amazing event was the theological belief that God equipped and sanctified every believer for Christian work, which provided the groundwork for the great Lay Revival that began around 1858.

**Greater Public Ministry for Women:** Phoebe Palmer became more and more influential as time passed, addressing larger and larger groups. It was her insistence on public testimony that gave numerous timid women the courage to stand up in open settings. Many agree that one of the most outstanding of Phoebe's accomplishments was her encouragement of Catherine Booth, wife of the founder of the Salvation Army, to begin her preaching ministry. It was during the revival of 1858 that women gained prominence in ministry. The Mennonite Brethren were the first to credential women in the 1880s, and later the Church of the Nazarene in 1899. Wesleyan Methodists would also occasionally ordain women.

**Biblical Focus:** Phoebe Palmer claimed that her knowledge came directly from God, another interesting parallel to Thérèse of Lisieux, although Palmer would state that her primary inspiration was the Bible, while Thérèse would credit a direct mystical communication with God. As a result of Palmer's

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<sup>447</sup> T. Smith, 122.

teaching, this revival movement tested all experiences by way of the most faithful interpretation of scripture.

#### IV. THE REVIVAL OF 1857-1858

The revival of 1857 began as the result of interdenominational daily prayer meetings in New York City. The first meeting was in September at the Old Dutch Church on Fulton Street, and by the time of the stock market crash that October, attendance was escalating. There is no question that the financial crisis had an impact on the turnout, but the fact is the movement had already begun prior to this. In addition to the prayer meetings, there had been a concerted effort in 1856 by the New York Sunday School Union to reach the poor. Dozens of cities in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts were touched by this movement, where Phoebe Palmer's preaching was often heard.

#### V. TENT REVIVAL

Kenneth Brown, in *Inskip, McDonald, Fowler: "Wholly and Forever Thine,"* traces the development of the holiness camp meetings. Although camp meetings in general had gained popularity much earlier, it was John Inskip's emphasis on holiness that was the focus. The first such camp meeting took place in Vineland, New Jersey, from July 17 to 26, 1867, with crowds of 10,000 to 15,000. Two years later it is said that the crowd was estimated at one-quarter of a million in Round Lake, New York. Early on the services were described by an eye witness as a "baptism of fire... 'intimate communion' with God... wave after wave of divine power rolled over the congregation."<sup>448</sup> B.M. Adams described the meetings, day after day, as filled with "power." This success attracted the attention of the news media with full-page write-ups. Many denominations participated: "Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, and others enthusiastically waved the banner of holiness."<sup>449</sup>

The following year the camp meetings were split into three meetings. A large tent that would seat 3,000 was purchased. Inskip travelled the country with this tent, holding holiness camp meetings in places such as San Francisco, California, Indiana and Washington, D.C. Methodist churches were often birthed out of these meetings.

Along with new Methodist churches, several holiness denominations were also formed as a result of the meetings, although the latter would not have been at the instigation of Inskip or his close associates. Many holiness periodicals were started, developing a new genre of literature. According to Dayton, after

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<sup>448</sup> Kenneth Brown, 81.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid, 104.



the Civil War and during the Tent Revivals, one can see a shift from the upper classes to the lower classes.<sup>450</sup> It is important to note that holiness, as a movement, took place primarily among the poor and socially disenfranchised in America. This trend would continue through the early decades of the Pentecostal movement.

## **VI. THE KESWICK MOVEMENT**

Another branch of the Holiness movement that influenced events in America and the world began in England in the 1870s. The Holiness movement in England was popular primarily among Evangelical Anglicans, and assumed the name Keswick, taken from the location of the annual conventions in Keswick, England, starting in 1875. The Keswick doctrine was positioned somewhere between the American Holiness group and the American Revival Movement: "Over against Torrey and Moody, the Keswick teaching was more concerned with the second blessing as an answer to sin, but on the other hand, it shied away from the perfectionism of the American Holiness teaching."<sup>451</sup>

D. L. Moody brought some of the key Keswick figures back to the United States, men such as Andrew Murray, F.B. Meyer, A.J. Gordon, and A.B. Simpson. It was the Keswick movement that changed the goal of the "second blessing" from an "emphasis on 'heart purity' to that of an 'endowment of spiritual power for service.'"<sup>452</sup> Moody, as a revivalist, became a key transitional figure in changing the theology of sanctification to empowerment for later Pentecostals.<sup>453</sup>

## **CONCLUSION - THREE GROUPS**

By the end of the nineteenth century, there were three groups in the Holiness movement. First, the Wesleyan position that viewed the second blessing as one of sanctification; second, the Keswick position, across the Atlantic, which diminished the importance of sanctification and saw the second blessing as an "endowment of power"; finally, the third blessing group, which maintained the holiness doctrine of Wesley, adding to it a third blessing of Holy Spirit baptism. Since the Reformed group saw the second blessing as an "endowment of power," it is most likely that the Keswick and Reformed movements were linked in America.

By this time, an emphasis on holiness had permeated American culture, which is hard to believe a mere hundred years later. Palmer and her followers' ongoing revivals, camp meetings and small groups

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<sup>450</sup> Dayton, 77.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>452</sup> Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 3.

<sup>453</sup> Allan Anderson, 28.

impacted America on a remarkable level. The growth of the Methodist and Baptist Churches was a result of new followers in the Christian faith and the holiness tradition. One can observe in Palmer's teaching similarities to Thérèse of Lisieux, even though it was decades before Thérèse was born and most likely a tradition she never witnessed. This raises the question, how did such similar views of holiness develop from such divergent streams? With this in mind, we will consider the beginnings of the Pentecostal movement, for it was out of the growing and changing Holiness movement that the ground was made fertile to receive the seed of Pentecostalism.

Another critical point concerns Thomas à Kempis. If à Kempis was the primary foundation for holy living in Wesley's life, then, by inference, à Kempis was the foundation for the Holiness movement and thus for William Seymour. While there is perhaps no direct connection between Seymour and à Kempis, Seymour by his loyalty to the Holiness tradition and the Methodist Church (i.e., Wesley) certainly indirectly inherited à Kempis' ideas. What I am here suggesting is that, in this way, Thomas à Kempis could be considered the father of holiness in both the Catholic revival, begun with Thérèse, and the Pentecostal revival, begun with Parham and Seymour. This is not to say that all of his ideas are contained in both movements or that the movements have no theological distinctives. Rather, it is the position that in the area of holiness the teachings of à Kempis are deeply ingrained in both traditions. Since this thesis is about holiness, this fact is of central importance and will be considered in more detail in Chapter 7.



## **SECTION 2 – EARLY PENTECOSTALISM**

### **I. THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN PENTECOSTALISM**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As has already been noted, “speaking in tongues” and other Charismatic gifts are mentioned by various individuals and groups prior to the Topeka, Kansas Outpouring. Yet, it is this event that most clearly marks the inception of the modern Pentecostal movement. Even though this group did not have the most influence during the first decade of the Pentecostal revival, it was clearly the beginning point.

#### **A. CHARLES PARHAM**

During the summer of 1898, Charles Parham opened Bethel Healing Home in Topeka, Kansas. In its early days, this local group ministered as a small Bible Institute, a place of healing, an adoption agency, and ministry to the poor. Charles Parham writes that during one December he encouraged his students to study the question of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and to work to discover the “evidence” of that gift. After giving this assignment, he left for Kansas City for a few days, returning on December 30, 1900. He then discussed the question with his students and was astonished that they had all concluded that the evidence of Holy Spirit baptism was speaking in tongues. Agnes N. Ozman, a student of the school for only a few months and an experienced holiness minister, asked to have hands laid on her that she might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Parham agreed to do so, and soon after she was speaking in tongues. Parham remembers: “...a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking in the Chinese language, and was unable to speak English for three days.”<sup>454</sup> This took place on the eve of January 1, 1901. Prayer continued for the next couple of days and a total of 12<sup>455</sup> received the gift of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Howard Stanley stated that he saw “cloven tongues like as of fire come down into the corner of the room on the third night after Miss Agnes Ozman received the Holy Spirit.”<sup>456</sup> One of the original students, S.J. Riggins, withdrew from the school and declared tongues to be “fake” and that the group as a whole had been led to fanaticism. Still, as a pessimistic witness, he nevertheless corroborated the basic facts of this important event.

What made this event unique was that this was the first time any group had theologically connected speaking in tongues as the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In addition, Parham

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<sup>454</sup> Charles Parham, *The Life of Charles Parham: Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement*, Cited by Larry Martin, *The Topeka Outpouring of 1901*. (Joplin, Missouri: Christian Life Books, 2000), 63.

<sup>455</sup> Some reports say a total of thirteen people received.

taught that the contrary was also true, that those who did not speak in tongues had not been filled with the Holy Spirit. Parham moved to Kansas City following the death of his son and held revival meetings in Kansas and Missouri in 1903 and 1904, finally relocating his team to Texas in 1905, where he had some very well-attended meetings. Eventually, he opened another Bible College in Houston, Texas. By the middle of 1906, he was at the height of his popularity, with a following of perhaps 10,000 who had received this “baptism” and the name of “the Apostolic Faith.” As a follower of Wesleyan doctrine, Parham accepted the tradition of “three blessings.”

Larry Martin accurately highlights some of Parham’s theological errors, which were soon rejected by other Pentecostal groups: 1. Total annihilation of the wicked; 2. The need for the baptism in the Holy Spirit to join in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9.); 3. The requirement that the gift of tongues be a known language (*xenoglossic*);<sup>457</sup> 4. Extreme racism;<sup>458</sup> 5. White superiority (that interracial marriages caused the flood in Genesis); 6. Rejection of all denominational organisations;<sup>459</sup> 7. That Queen Victoria was a descendent of Adam; 8. Zionism; 9. The Ten Lost Tribes.<sup>460</sup> His racist views alone were so bizarre that they are worth repeating in order to understand the extent of his often strange teachings:

Today the descendants of Abraham are the Hindus, the Japanese, the high German, the Danes (tribe of Dan) the Scandinavians, the Anglo-Saxon and their descendants in all parts of the world. These are the nations who have acquired and retained experimental salvation and deep spiritual truths; while the Gentiles, - the Russians, the Greek, the Italian, the low German, the French, the Spanish and their descendants in all parts are formalists, scarce ever obtaining the knowledge and truth discovered by Luther, - that of justification by faith or of the truth taught by Wesley, sanctification by faith; while the heathen, - the Black race, the Brown race, the Red race, the Yellow race, in spite of missionary zeal and effort are nearly all heathen still; but will, in the dawning of the coming age be given to Jesus for an inheritance.<sup>461</sup>

Allan Anderson highlights Parham’s racism as part of his ethos from the debut, as described in Parham’s book published in 1902.<sup>462</sup> According to Parham, only descendents of Abraham, whom he describes as Aryan, could participate in the Bride of Christ. Eventually, all African Americans were excluded from this group.

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<sup>456</sup> Stanley Frodsham, Gospel Publishing House. Cited by Larry Martin, *The Topeka Outpouring*, 169.

<sup>457</sup> The literal translation of this word would be “strange or foreign tongue.” Parham used the word to mean “foreign language,” but it came to mean “known human languages” in contrast to a heavenly or angelic language.

<sup>458</sup> Charles Parham. *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*. Baxter Springs, Kansas: Apostolic Faith Bible College, 1910. Reprinted in 1978, 106-107.

<sup>459</sup> Larry Martin, *The Topeka Outpouring*, 29.

<sup>460</sup> Charles Parham, 91-105.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid, 106-107.

<sup>462</sup> Charles Parham. *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*. Baxter Springs, Kansas: Apostolic Faith Bible College, 1910. First published in 1902, Reprinted in 1978.



In 1907, Parham was arrested and charged with sodomy. Some of the evidence provided in this trial came at the hands of Edward Neer, a previous disciple. While the charges were dropped, they would leave a dark cloud over Parham's ministry. It seems likely that Agnes Ozman intentionally omitted Parham from her testimony because of this moral accusation and that many Pentecostal leaders distanced themselves from him due to both his indiscretions and peculiar doctrines.

Despite Parham's theological blunders, he should be remembered as a key Pentecostal figure. He wrote the first Pentecostal book, published the first Pentecostal magazine and was the first modern Pentecostal theologian. It seems that his legacy is safe. Although the Holiness Churches may consider their origins as being prior to this time, it was not until Parham stated the Pentecostal doctrine that they truly became such. If the litmus test is ongoing influence, then all would agree that Parham quickly faded from a place of influence. However, in terms of theological formulation, Parham is clearly the beginning place, even in the Pentecostal Holiness Churches that would have reason to point to another theological father if they could, since they predate him.

## **B. A PENTECOSTAL HERMENEUTIC**

Prior to the Pentecostal era, and even now, most doctrine was primarily formulated through a Pauline perspective. In contrast to this, the first Pentecostals read the book of Acts and concluded that speaking in tongues was the sign or evidence that one had been filled with the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal theology requires a shift from Paul to Luke for the formation of its pneumatology.<sup>463</sup> This change from the Pauline epistles to Lukan narrative required that doctrine be formed from scripture that was principally narrative, but narrative is notoriously difficult to interpret theologically.<sup>464</sup> Most mainline churches rejected this hermeneutic along with Pentecostal doctrine. It is interesting to note that this proclivity for the writings of Luke has a parallel in the Roman Catholic Church with a comparable singular focus on the Gospels.

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<sup>463</sup> Much of the other core doctrines of Pentecostalism are similar to non-Pentecostals even in their use and interpretation of Pauline theology. It is only critical when forming the doctrine of the Holy Spirit that Acts be given hermeneutical influence.

<sup>464</sup> In recent years, Robert P. Menzies and William W. Menzies in their book *Spirit and Power* have developed a sophisticated Pentecostal hermeneutic based not only upon the book of Acts but on both Lukan books, the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. This does not work from a simple narrative proof-text model as seen amongst early Pentecostals, but takes all of Luke-Acts and looks at the causes and results of Spirit Baptism.

## II. WILLIAM J. SEYMOUR (1870-1922)

### INTRODUCTION

The second person to be examined in this work is William Seymour. In this section, we will briefly look at his background prior to the famous events of Azusa Street and recount the story of the “revival” in Los Angeles. Finally, we will examine some of his doctrinal points of view as seen in his own writings and those who followed him in the Pentecostal tradition.

### A. HIS LIFE AND INFLUENCE

#### 1. Background

Although culturally quite distant, Seymour’s life is contemporary in time to Thérèse of Lisieux. Rather than a life of privilege, however, he was the son of slaves. Seymour was born on May 2, 1870, in Centerville, Louisiana, about 80 miles southwest of New Orleans near the Gulf Coast, a region noted as being dominantly Roman Catholic along with having many flavours of voodoo and syncretistic religions. While his parents, Simon and Phillis, had at one time been slaves, at the time of his birth they were hardworking and free citizens. William was baptised in a Catholic Church when he was four days old. He had seven siblings, only four of whom survived, and is noted in the 1880 census of the region as being enrolled in school. All of the children were raised in the Roman Catholic tradition and undoubtedly influenced by African superstitions common in that region.<sup>465</sup> William’s father Simon died on November 14, 1891, at the age of 54, from complications from an illness dating back to his service during the Civil War.

The South possessed a strong element of white supremacist groups, similar to the Ku Klux Klan of today, a position supported “...by many white church leaders, scientists and the press.”<sup>466</sup> By 1896, Seymour had moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, most likely for better employment. There he was converted in a “coloured” Methodist Episcopal Church. Records indicate that he served as a waiter during his three years of residence there. Seymour probably gained an appreciation for Wesley’s writings at this time, but soon he rejected Methodism because of its post-millennial eschatology and discounting of individual revelation.

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<sup>465</sup> Mel Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 23.

<sup>466</sup> Iain MacRobert. *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*. (New York: S. Martin’s Press, 1988), 50.



An Azusa Street contemporary notes that Seymour was “saved and sanctified” through the ministry of the Evening Light Saints, now known as the Church of God based in Anderson, Indiana, just north of Indianapolis. Their influence in Indiana was notable at the time. Around the turn of the century, he moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where some say he attended Bible School, although there is no historical evidence to support this. Here Seymour was greatly influenced by holiness preacher Martin Wells Knapp and his Bible School. It was also during this time that Seymour contracted smallpox and lost sight in one eye. He considered this to be God’s judgement for having been unwilling to enter the ministry earlier.

Seymour moved back to the South in 1903 to reconnect with his family members and begin his public ministry. He made Houston his home base for around two years and held evangelistic meetings in Texas and Louisiana, and afterwards felt led to Jackson, Mississippi, for more spiritual training. In 1905, Seymour returned to Houston where Lucy Farrow requested that he take over the church she had started, and later encouraged him to attend Parham’s school in Houston. The Jim Crow<sup>467</sup> laws made it illegal for Seymour to study in the classroom, but he was allowed to listen in the hallway and so attended Parham’s school during the early months of 1906.

Not only was Seymour banished from the classroom, he was not allowed to be ministered to at Parham’s services. He and the other blacks were required to sit in the back row and were not prayed for at the end of the service,<sup>468</sup> an outrageous behaviour also dictated by the Jim Crow laws. This may explain why Seymour did not experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit at an earlier date.

## **2. Azusa Street**

In early February of 1906, Julia Hutchins invited Seymour to pastor a small holiness mission in Los Angeles. Parham discouraged him from going, but Seymour ignored his counsel and arrived in Los Angeles on February 22, 1906.

Los Angeles began to rapidly grow following the arrival of the railroad in 1869, being touted by developers as a new utopia. Joseph Widney, the president of the University of Southern California, published a book in 1907 proclaiming the future of Los Angeles would be completely white! At that time, 1910, the city was 78 percent Anglo. Today, however, one can see that Widney was quite mistaken.

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<sup>467</sup> The “Jim Crow Laws” is an informal term that refers to a set of court decisions that separated blacks and whites in most public settings following the Civil War. The Supreme Court rejected the Civil Rights Act of 1875 paving the way for southern states to create laws that marginalized the black population. White supremacy occurred between the years of 1865 to 1890 when, through unspeakable brutalities, blacks were killed, separated or kept from voting through tactics of fear and intimidation. It is this context of extreme racial hatred that makes the revival of Azusa Street so remarkable.

<sup>468</sup> MacRobert, 51.

William Seymour came into this racially-mixed city, preaching at a church affiliated with the Southern California Holiness Association. Because he proclaimed the necessity of speaking in tongues as evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, however, it was not long before he was literally locked out of the building, as the leaders of the association voted against his new doctrine.<sup>469</sup> With no place to live and no money to return to Houston, he stayed with Edward and Mattie Lee, often spending entire days in prayer. He then began a Bible study in their home and soon needed a larger location. Seymour moved the meeting to the home of Richard Asberry, located on Bonnie Brae Avenue.

On April 6, Seymour declared a 10-day fast along with meditating on Acts 2:1-4. Prayer was held every evening. On April 9, Seymour was getting ready to go to the meeting on Bonnie Brae Avenue when Mr. Lee, a black janitor who worked at the First National Bank, complained that he was not feeling well. Lee had been fasting for three days. Previously, he had experienced a vision of apostles Peter and John shaking under the power of God and speaking in tongues. Lee then asked to be prayed for so he would feel well enough to attend the meeting that night. Lucy Farrow declared that it was time for Mr. Lee to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. When they placed their hands upon him and prayed, he fell to the floor and began speaking in tongues. His wife was distressed by his apparent collapse, but the others rejoiced that he had spoken in tongues, the first person in Los Angeles to do so.

At the meeting that night, Seymour spoke on Acts 2:4 and then shared what had happened to Mr. Lee. Someone else spoke out in tongues and then the whole group was "swept to its knees as by some mighty power."<sup>470</sup> Records indicate that there were no white people at this critical meeting when the Spirit was first poured out in Los Angeles.<sup>471</sup> Jennie Moore began to play the piano and sing in her new tongue. "Bud" Traynor shouted the news to the neighbours and word spread like wildfire. The next day so many people had come, Seymour had to preach from the front porch. One eyewitness remembers: "People came from everywhere. By the next morning there was no getting near the house. As the people came they would fall under the power, and the whole city was stirred. The sick were healed and sinners were saved just as they came in."<sup>472</sup> People were shouting, speaking and singing in tongues. Seymour himself received the "baptism" on April 12 after praying all evening. So many gathered on the front porch one day

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<sup>469</sup> Stanley Burgess, Gary McGee, & Patrick Alexander, Patrick H. *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Regnery Reference Library, 1988), 780.

<sup>470</sup> Shumway, cited by Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 68.

<sup>471</sup> MacRobert, 52.

<sup>472</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 32.



that it collapsed, and the group decided to seek another location. A lease was signed for the old AME Church on Azusa Street on April 13, 1906:

Here they had rented an old frame building, formerly a Methodist church, in the centre of the city, now a long time out of use for meetings. It had become a receptacle for old lumber, plaster, etc. They had cleared space enough in the surrounding dirt and debris to lay some planks on top of empty nail kegs, with seats enough for possibly thirty people, if I remember rightly. These were arranged in a square, facing one another.<sup>473</sup>

Bartleman recalls that his first visit to the Azusa mission was on April 19, 1906, with about "a dozen saints there."<sup>474</sup>

The meetings were known for their emotional nature: "The expressive worship and praise at Azusa Street, which included shouting and dancing, had been common among Appalachian whites as well as Southern blacks."<sup>475</sup> What was most amazing about these meetings, however, was that blacks and whites worshiped together in harmony and—perhaps even more remarkable at the time—with a black pastor. It was this revival at Azusa that would sweep around the world.

Bartleman says, and other sources concur, that the meetings had no structure because everything was guided by the Holy Spirit. In such a setting, all were considered equal. Race, education, wealth, and social status did not matter. The only thing that mattered was being guided and directed by God's Spirit. All were permitted to speak and emotions were allowed to run free. Eventually, God would lead one of them to speak to those gathered. The Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission held revival services for three-and-one-half years, with meetings every day, seven days a week. The name of Seymour's ministry, *The Apostolic Faith*, followed the direction of Charles Parham, as did his periodical, having a circulation of as much as 50,000. Seymour's connection to Parham was one of relationship, not of church hierarchy. This influence, however, did not last long.

In the September 1906 edition of *The Apostolic Faith*<sup>476</sup> is a letter from Charles Parham sharing how he viewed the Los Angeles groups as one of his offspring.<sup>477</sup> Perhaps he was correct in this assertion,

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<sup>473</sup> Frank Bartleman. *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles, As it was in the Beginning*. (Los Angeles, Frank Bartleman, 1925), 47-48. (This was reprinted in the book: *Witness to Pentecost: The Life of Frank Bartleman*. New York, Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985.)

<sup>474</sup> The size of the crowd noted here seems questionable. Perhaps Bartleman confused an earlier meeting with the meeting he mentions on the 19<sup>th</sup>. By this time, the crowds had become so large that a larger building was needed, hence the move to Azusa Street. It seems unlikely that there were only twelve in attendance unless it was an early morning meeting. In addition, this was the day after the first article in the Los Angeles Daily Times, so crowds would have been much larger this.

<sup>475</sup> Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 4.

<sup>476</sup> This was the magazine sent out by the Azusa Street Mission. It was given without charge and published as many as fifty thousand copies per run. Because no fee was charged, it was sent out only as funds were available. This first edition was published about five months after the start of the revival.

<sup>477</sup> Charles Parham, *The Apostolic Faith*, September 1906, 1; Reprinted, 1

but history tells us that when he came for a visit, things did not go well between the two men, and Parham was expelled from leadership in Los Angeles. He began his own services at the corner of Broadway and Temple Streets, but was not greatly successful. Accordingly, Parham rejected Seymour and denounced the Azusa meetings for the rest of his life.

At the Azusa Revival, Parham had observed both blacks and whites experiencing God with the same physical actions, and attributed this to the influence of black culture rather than to the Holy Spirit. One person told Parham, “white people [were] imitating [the] unintelligent, crude negroisms of the Southland and laying it on the Holy Ghost.”<sup>478</sup> From this and other comments, it appears that the disintegration of the relationship between Parham and Seymour was over racial issues more than anything else. Parham desired to support the ideas and practices of White Supremacy while Seymour deplored these practices and, as the leader of the nascent movement, would do anything in his power to keep integrated worship alive. Seymour responded tactfully to some of Parham’s most significant theological errors, without mentioning his name, in the December 6 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*. Apparently, Seymour had far more biblical theology than did Parham, perhaps another source of division.

On April 17, the *Los Angeles Daily Times* dispatched a reporter whose article came out the following day and was very critical of the revival movement. (Excerpts from this article are highlighted in the next section of this chapter.) On that same morning, April 18, 1906, the devastating earthquake shook San Francisco. Followers of the new revival saw this earthquake as God’s judgement on the sins of San Francisco. Bartleman soon wrote a pamphlet that listed numerous scriptures about God’s judgement and in particular about earthquakes. By May 11, over 125,000 copies were in circulation on the streets of Los Angeles and the surrounding cities. Those at the revival also concluded, from the relationship between the publishing of the *Times* article and the earthquake, that this was a sign of the imminent return of the Lord. Some local pastors dismissed these apocalyptic interpretations, but that did not stop their influence or hinder very much the growth of the revival.

In the February-March 1907 edition of *The Apostolic Faith*, W.H. Durham shared his testimony on being baptised in the Holy Spirit, and of Seymour wrote:

He is the meekest man I ever met. He walks and talks with God. His power is in his weakness. He seems to maintain a helpless dependence on God and is as simple hearted as a little child, and at the same time is so filled with God that you feel the love and power every time you get near him.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> Charles Parham, *Charles F. Parham*, 160-163. Cited by Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*. 100-101.

<sup>479</sup> W.H. Durham, *The Apostolic Faith*, February-March 1907, 4; Reprinted, 24.



undeniable, and it would appear that most of the participants were women—most, but not all. Although critical and from the perspective of one who likely had no understanding of the phrase “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” the article surely attracted many curious spectators.

Donald Gee categorizes the opposition to the revival: first, the established Church was almost always dubious of any revival movement; second, there was not a strong leader at the head of the movement, as Seymour was not an influential person on the world stage; third, the press focused on the extremes of the movement, creating fear among those who read their reports; fourth, emotions were allowed to run rampant, creating events and situations that would be rejected by any responsible Christian leader; fifth, as the movement grew, more and more people became involved, precipitating an inevitable clash with the established Church; finally, many in the Holiness movement were already claiming to have been baptised in the Holy Spirit. This new doctrine required them to reject their own teachings, something they were unwilling to do.<sup>481</sup>

#### 4. The Revival Spreads

Each edition of *The Apostolic Faith* marks the growth of the new doctrine by city, country and continent. In December 1906, cities mentioned include Fort Worth, Benton Harbor, Seattle, San Diego, Portsmouth, and Salem. G.B. Cashwell, of Dunn, North Carolina, was filled with the Holy Spirit in Los Angeles and began to spread the message in the South. Numerous people accepted the message and his congregation eventually changed their church’s name from “The Holiness Church” to “The Pentecostal Holiness Church.”<sup>482</sup> By February of 1907, the growth had crossed oceans to include London, Stockholm, Honolulu, Calcutta, and the country of Norway.

Thomas Ball Barratt was a Methodist pastor in Oslo who came to the United States in hopes of raising funds to build a hall back home. He did not accomplish his financial goals, but his journey was successful as on November 16, 1906, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Weeks later he returned home, where news of his experience quickly spread via church publications and many came to seek from him the experience of Azusa Street. Through Barrett, Pentecostal centres sprang up in Sweden, Germany, India, Denmark, and England. Barratt’s intention was to remain in the Methodist Church, but as

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<sup>480</sup> “Weird Babel of Tongues,” *Los Angeles Daily Times*, April 18, 1906. All of the articles from the *Los Angeles Daily Times* are from the archives of the newspaper and can be found at the website: <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/latimes/>

<sup>481</sup> Donald Gee. *The Pentecostal Movement Including the Story of the War Years (1940-1947)*. (London: Elim Publishing Company, Limited, 1949), 16-19.

<sup>482</sup> Frodsham, *With Signs Following*, 41.

time passed it was apparent this would not be allowed. He resigned in 1916 with his Bishop still urging him to stay.

One of the most interesting and generally unknown stories concerns the rise of Pentecost in the Anglican Church. Alexander Boddy was the vicar of All Saints' in Sunderland at the turn of the century. He supported the Keswick Convention and was deeply touched by the Welsh Revival. Continuing his quest for a deeper relationship with God, he travelled to meet T.B. Barratt in March of 1907. Upon his return, he went to the Keswick Convention with a tract he had written, *Pentecost for England*. He gave away thousands of these tracts, but was not warmly received. Boddy was not discouraged, however, and invited Barratt to come and speak in August of 1907. The first service was held at night, and three members of his church were filled with the Holy Spirit. The national press began to publicise the meetings and people came from far and wide; the meetings were not emotional, rather they were "quiet and orderly and there was no working up of people's emotions."<sup>483</sup> Soon after, Smith Wigglesworth, a plumber from Bradford, was also invited to participate. Another English minister, Cecil Polhill, united with Boddy. While they would remain a part of the Anglican Church, they continued to support the Pentecostal movement the rest of their lives. Local papers carried the stories of many healings, so by 1910 the message was moving quickly from town to town—Lytham, Preston, Bradford and cities in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

Throughout World War I, the Pentecostal movement took shape as a denomination, and the influence of Boddy and Polhill diminished. Men such as Smith Wigglesworth and Stanley Frodsham came to the forefront. Some may wonder why this movement was allowed to continue for so many years in the Anglican Church. The simple response is that the Bishop of Durham, Dr. Handley Moule, was sympathetic to them and no objections were made to the Pentecostal meetings, so they continued for years.

Other revivals are described in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and France. Douglas Scott ministered in France and reported many healings and miracles. He ministered in Lisieux for three-and-one-half years and reported 350 baptised members and the starting of 13 other congregations in nearby cities:

I will give you a little account of what I saw at Lisieux. This is a place of pilgrimage to the latest Catholic saint, St. Therese, and it might even rival Lourdes. There have been supposed Catholic miracles and a shrine has been built costing 140 million francs. Our evangelist opened up in a

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<sup>483</sup> Michael Harper. *As at the Beginning: The Twentieth Century Pentecostal Revival*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1965), 38.



transformed granary on the first floor, and God has given him some remarkable healings. I listened to the following testimonies: A little girl who was blind from birth had her eyes opened by the Lord. Another little girl who was deaf and dumb can now both hear and speak. Cases of cancer have been healed...<sup>484</sup>

It is interesting to note that the message of Pentecost came through the city of Lisieux, Thérèse's dwelling place, in the 1930s. Similar stories of healing, miracles and baptisms in the Holy Spirit were reported from India, Ceylon, China, Egypt, South Africa, West Africa, Chile, South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Pacific Islands.

## 5. Parham or Seymour

In black churches, Seymour is credited with founding the Pentecostal movement. Leaders of the COGIC proclaim with pride that the movement was "first received and propagated by a coloured man, Elder W. J. Seymour, and by a handful of other coloured worshippers..."<sup>485</sup> There is a current battle over whether Seymour or Parham is the father of Pentecostalism. Although it is true that Parham wrote the first Pentecostal doctrine, it is in Seymour and not Parham that one finds the radical social changes that Pentecostalism brought about in its first few decades. Parham could not assimilate Seymour's vision due to his own racial prejudice, which would also explain why blacks reject his position of leadership. For Parham, Jews and Aryans were the master races: "Under them are the Gentiles: French, Spanish, Italians, Greeks, Russians and Turks."<sup>486</sup> Some have argued that Seymour could not be the father of Pentecostalism because his vision of racially integrated churches did not survive. I, however, disagree. The fact that it was not at first realised does not take away from Seymour's vision as being prophetic and later on accomplished.

Seymour's vision of Pentecost is closer to scripture than was that of Parham, but one would err to utterly dismiss Parham. After all, it was at Parham's school in Houston that Seymour received his first teaching of Pentecost and it was not until Parham's disciples arrived from Houston that revival broke out in Los Angeles. In view of Parham's racism, it is easy to see why many would seek to distance themselves from such abhorrent practices. Although many of Parham's views were rejected by the Church early on, he is obviously the father of Pentecostal doctrine.<sup>487</sup> In fairness, one must recognise the contribution of both men. More will be said of this issue looking back at it from the present day.

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<sup>484</sup> Douglas Scott, Cited by Frosham, *With Signs Following*, 90-91. This probably took place in the 1930s.

<sup>485</sup> COGIC Spokesman. Cited by Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 180.

<sup>486</sup> Walter Hollenweger. *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), 42.

<sup>487</sup> It is difficult for me to accept Parham as the father of Pentecostalism, as his racist views are frankly despicable and twisted. Yet, from a disinterested position, whether or not one agrees with Pentecostal

## B. DOCTRINAL VIEWS OF WILLIAM SEYMOUR

### 1. His Writings

In reading *The Apostolic Faith* journals published between 1906 and 1908, one can gain perspective on the events of the Azusa Street revival. Even more, there are numerous articles by William Seymour wherein one can recognise some of the interesting doctrinal distinctives of the day, some of which would stand the test of time, others that would not.

*The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, California*<sup>488</sup> was originally published in 1915. This book along with the sermons published in *The Apostolic Faith* is the only work of William Seymour ever to be in print.

*Doctrines and Discipline* is noteworthy, as portions were copied from other sources; even the title was derived from *Doctrines and Discipline* of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and is very dependent on Wesley's use of the "Thirty-nine Articles" from the Anglican Church. The majority of Seymour's "Articles of Religion," pages 21-25, were selected and copied from the "Thirty-nine Articles," often using the same titles. The comparison of Seymour's book to these other sources would be an extensive and interesting study on its own.

### 2. Racial Unity to Racial Division

We have already examined the problem of racism in some of the Pentecostal denominations, but what were Seymour's personal views on the subject of race? All of the evidence from the early meetings at Azusa Street indicates that the meetings were comprised of many races. Bartleman recalls: "The whole building, upstairs and down, had now been cleared and put into use. There were far more white people than coloured coming. The 'colour line' was washed away in the blood."<sup>489</sup> Valdez agrees, suggesting the mix was almost equal parts black and white. I believe one can safely assume that Seymour supported the uniting of ethnic groups in worship, since he said nothing against it in his early writings.

MacRobert asserts that the Pentecostal movement originated as a black movement. Some black leaders such as James S. Tinney, a black theologian, would agree, saying it was later adapted by the white churches. Key black leaders including Seymour, W.E. Fuller (Fire Baptised Holiness Church of the Americas), C.H. Mason (COGIC) and G.T. Haywood (Pentecostal Assemblies of the World) were

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doctrine, Parham must be given credit as its innovator, the first person to clearly define *glossolalia* as the "physical evidence" of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

<sup>488</sup> William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, Cal.* (Los Angeles: *The Apostolic Faith Mission*, 1915).

<sup>489</sup> Bartleman, (1925), 54.



children of freed slaves. However, white historians more often claim that the movement began as an interracial work of the Spirit. Although beginning with only blacks, all the evidence suggests that the meetings were soon largely integrated, lending credence to the argument that it was a racially integrated movement from its earliest days.

Less than 10 years after the start of the movement, one can see in *Doctrines and Discipline* that Seymour's attitude completely changed. Several comments indicate an obvious break between Seymour, his now mostly black church and the white churches. MacRobert highlights the conflict with Durham as the primary cause for Seymour's rejection of white leadership, but there were in fact many reasons for this change of heart. We know that Seymour's volume was published shortly after the formation of the AoG in 1914. Thus it could be that much of this work was a reaction to the withdrawal of numerous white pastors from the mixed denomination of COGIC.

Certain remarks, however, would suggest it was more personal, the result of white men trying to take over the mission in Los Angeles and attempting to exclude or remove Seymour from leadership. One well-known historical moment is the conflict that developed between Seymour and the editor of *The Apostolic Faith*. Following Seymour's marriage to Jennie Moore, Editor Clara Lum relocated to Portland, Oregon, taking not only the journal but the mailing list. Seymour was left without any voice for his mission, effectively ending written communication about the revival.

William Durham has already been mentioned, as well as Frank Bartleman. William Pendleton and possibly Elmer Fisher also led Pentecostal works in the area and gained members from Seymour's congregation. All of the men and women listed as doing the greatest harm to Seymour were white. Therefore, it is no surprise that he took measures in the 1915 constitution to ensure that only black persons were involved in the leadership of the Azusa Street Mission.

In the section on "Church Membership," Seymour wrote about the problem of division, obviously due to an issue of race, and referred to some event that seemed to have created great personal suffering:

Our coloured brethren must love our white brethren and respect them in the truth so that the word of God can have its free course, and our white brethren must love their coloured brethren and respect them in the truth so that the Holy Spirit won't be grieved. I hope we won't have any more trouble and division of spirit.<sup>490</sup>

It is evident that whatever occurred created a chasm in the church and was instigated by "white brothers."

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<sup>490</sup> William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline* (1915), 10. Underline mine.

As a result of this problem, it was required that all leaders of the church be black. The articles of incorporation, amended in 1915, state that the purpose of the Azusa Street Mission is for “the benefit of the coloured people of the State of California, but the people of all countries, climes, and nations shall be welcome.”<sup>491</sup> Hence, in less than a decade, there was a shift within the congregation at Azusa to primarily minister to blacks. Other races would not be turned away, but they were no longer the “target audience,” to use a contemporary phrase.

In the Mission’s constitution a few pages later, and also from Pastor Seymour’s comments, one can see an exclusion of whites from top leadership positions. Article C states: “The bishop, vice bishop and the trustees must be people of colour.”<sup>492</sup> This requirement was not in the original constitution (1907). It is tragic that a work that one assumes was of the Spirit and that initially brought racial unity to the Church became in a few short years—due to power-hungry interlopers—so divisive that united racial leadership was deemed impossible by the founder of the movement!

### 3. Three Blessings

The concept of the three blessings is plainly stated in the November 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*:

In Jesus Christ we get forgiveness of sin, and we get sanctification of our spirit, soul, and body, and upon that we get the gift of the Holy Ghost... These disciples to whom He was speaking, had been saved, sanctified, anointed with the Holy Spirit.<sup>493</sup>

Forgiveness, sanctification and baptism in the Holy Spirit: this idea of three blessings is also repeated and described in the January edition of *The Apostolic Faith*. In 1915, in *Doctrines and Discipline*, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is included as part of sanctification and portrayed as being a “sign” unto the believer, power for service, and love, but is still considered three blessings.<sup>494</sup>

William H. Durham, previously mentioned as one of the early devotees of the movement, was convinced that the three-blessing theology of Seymour was incorrect; he believed that the work of Christ had “finished” both salvation and sanctification. According to Durham, sanctification took place at salvation, so only two blessings were needed: salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He was locked out of the Azusa Street Mission in 1911, but his view of “finished work” was adapted by nearly half of the Pentecostals and is today the dominant view of American Pentecostals. The theology of three blessings can still be found amongst Pentecostal churches that follow the Wesleyan/Holiness doctrine.

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<sup>491</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>493</sup> William Seymour, *The Apostolic Faith*, November 1906, 2; Reprinted, 10.



#### 4. Speaking in Tongues is the Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

In Seymour's work and writing of *The Apostolic Faith*, the obvious sign that one had been baptised in the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues. He saw a clear connection between the two: "So they got down and got saved and sanctified and baptised with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues by the Holy Spirit."<sup>495</sup>

A decade later there is evidence of a shift in his view: "The baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire means to be flooded with the love of God and power for service and a love for truth as it is in God's word."<sup>496</sup> No mention was made here of the idea—so strong in many other Pentecostal groups of the time—that speaking in tongues was the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues was referred to as a "gift" of the Spirit or as one of the "signs" that would follow believers, but not as the evidence of the baptism.<sup>497</sup>

In the "Question and Answer" section of Seymour's *Doctrines and Discipline*, he makes the following observation: "I am afraid we have preached too much on tongues being the evidence of the gift of the Holy Spirit instead as one of the signs following the believer. (Mark 16:16-18)" (Page 31) Later, Seymour goes on to say: "When we set up tongues to be the Bible evidence of baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire only, we have left the divine word of God and have instituted our own teaching." (Page 91)<sup>498</sup>

This comment, a rejection of the foundation of Pentecostal doctrine, is brought into focus:

While tongues is one of the signs that follows God's Spirit-filled children, they will have to know the truth and do the truth. If not, grievous wolves will enter in among the flock and tear asunder the sheep. How will they get in? They will come in through the sign gift of speaking in tongues, and if God's children did not know anything more than that to be the evidence, they would not have a hard time to enter in among them and scatter them. (Page 91)

This brings us back to the issue of division. Apparently, some "tongues-speaking" people came into Seymour's church and attempted to divide the flock or steal some sheep. They earned favour because they spoke in tongues, but they lacked some of the other signs of God's Holy Spirit. This is supported by another statement in *Doctrines and Discipline*: "...no one in our work shall be known as receiving the Holy Ghost simply because he or she speaks in tongues alone." (Page 40)

The primary issue was that Seymour had been offended by "tongues-speaking" Christians who attempted to usurp his authority and steal his congregation. Seymour's comments in *Doctrines and*

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<sup>494</sup> William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline* (1915), 92.

<sup>495</sup> William Seymour, *The Apostolic Faith*, December 1906, 2; Reprinted, 14.

<sup>496</sup> William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline* (1915), 92.

<sup>497</sup> The discussion of tongues as one of the gifts of the spirit can be found on page 82.

<sup>498</sup> William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline* (1915), 91.

*Discipline* demonstrate that he had separated from his earlier position of evidentiary tongues. Even the AoG, which holds firmly to evidentiary tongues, acknowledges that Seymour did not maintain this position. Gary McGee correctly notes that the break between Seymour and his white brethren may have been the cause for this theological alteration and for the exclusion of whites from leadership.<sup>499</sup>

Parham had been so openly critical of the Azusa Street Mission by this time that it is feasible to draw a connection between his vicious attacks and Seymour's rejection of evidentiary tongues. As late as 1912, Parham was verbally assaulting Seymour's credibility. So by the time of *Doctrines and Discipline*, Seymour had set himself against the position of evidentiary tongues. Since Parham could speak in tongues and at the same time make such barbed attacks, Seymour perhaps reasoned that speaking in tongues must be independent of sanctification. Robeck rightly concludes:

William J. Seymour came to reject the theory [of evidentiary tongues] because he could not find consistency in the ethical dimension of those who claimed to have experienced it: the inability of whites to maintain a supportive role in relationship to a black pastor and the ugly spectacle of underlying or incipient racism played a role in the formation of his thought.<sup>500</sup>

Here Robeck has gone beyond the question of evidentiary tongues to the very heart of the issue. The lack of an ethical foundation on the part of Parham and those who followed him was evident as well in their racist attitudes and ultimate rejection of Seymour as the central leader of the Pentecostal revival.

As pertains to the issue of holiness, Seymour's assumption was that one's doctrine was proven correct by one's ability to love. Yet, today many theologians would question Seymour's view of entire sanctification. Thus the assumption that one's theology is correct or incorrect cannot be proven by one's fruit of the Spirit, love, or kindness. In the same sense that speaking in tongues is not proof of one's holiness, neither is love proof of one's theology.

The change in Seymour's doctrine concerning evidentiary tongues provides another parallel to Thérèse of Lisieux. Both can be seen as altering a major point of doctrine within their movements. For her, the change was from legalism to love, and was a doctrine deeply rooted in the Catholic Church. For him, it was a new doctrine, which he rejected soon afterwards.

## **5. The Complete Authority of the Bible**

There is no question that scripture played a key role in William Seymour's life. His articles in *The Apostolic Faith* were consistently supported by Bible verses. Such was his habit. His first article in the September 1906 issue, only one column in length, cites no less than seven verses.

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<sup>499</sup> Gary McGee, Editor. *Initial Evidence: Historical and biblical perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 65.



In *Doctrines and Discipline*, in the section entitled “Propositions and Statements,” scripture is given all authority over the Church. Proposition 1 reads: “The Bible is a divine revelation given of God to men and is a complete and infallible guide and standard of authority in all matters of religion and morals...”<sup>501</sup> The second proposition places the New Testament over any legal documents of the Church: “The New Testament is the constitution of Christianity, the charter of the Christian Church, the only authoritative code of ecclesiastical law, and the warrant and justification of all Christian institutions... The New Testament alone is their statute book, by which, without change, the body of Christ is to govern itself.”<sup>502</sup> In short, scripture was to Seymour the complete guide, both personally and for all questions of Church policy.

## 6. Anti-Divorce

The issue of divorce continues to divide churches today. In one of his articles, Seymour defined marriage and the rules that govern it according to scripture as he interpreted it:

Under the New Testament law, the law of Christ, there is but one cause for which a man may put away his wife, but no right to marry again. This cause is fornication or adultery. Matt. 5:31,32...Matt. 19:9...After a man has lawfully put away his wife, or a wife has lawfully put away her husband, they are positively forbidden to marry again, under the New Testament law, until the former companion is dead...Death is the only thing that severs the marriage tie.<sup>503</sup>

In another article written later that month, Seymour again underscored the importance of marital fidelity.

While not the focus of this study, the subject of divorce certainly continues to be one of the more challenging issues in the church at large.

In *Doctrine and Disciplines*, Seymour repeats his rejection of divorce,<sup>504</sup> stating that if someone is divorced they cannot remarry for any reason as long as their original spouse is still living. The importance of marriage and rejection of divorce are again repeated in the chapter on “Marriage and the Family.”<sup>505</sup> His statements would agree with most Pentecostals of the day; however, he moved beyond this to the solution for marriages that had broken this requirement. Seymour required that all persons who had remarried while a former spouse was still living should separate: “All such unscriptural marriages must be dissolved to get clear from the sinful state of adultery.”<sup>506</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> Robeck, “The Bible Evidence,” 89.

<sup>501</sup> William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline* (1915), 49.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> William Seymour, *The Apostolic Faith*, September 1907, 3; Reprinted, 43.

<sup>504</sup> William Seymour. Edited by Larry Martin. *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission*. (Joplin, Missouri: Christian Life Books, 2000), 48.

<sup>505</sup> William Seymour. Edited by Larry Martin. *The Doctrines and Discipline*, 116.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid. 120.

While these statements would be considered absurd today, they must be viewed in their cultural setting. Because divorce is now so commonplace, today's Church has been forced to accept it, right or wrong. In Seymour's day, divorce was highly unusual and, in his strict biblical worldview, a great sin. It was the focal point of holiness preaching, as certain sexual sins might be today. It is also worth noting that one finds between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics a similar position on divorce. Although for both groups the strictness of this stance has been watered down by the average parishioner, it is amongst Pentecostal ministers still quite rigid. One finds in the issue of divorce (and thus sexual purity) a significant pattern of holiness. In Thérèse's life, it was evidenced by her desire to be chaste.

## **7. Anti-establishment**

Seymour, like Parham before him, was anti-establishment. Even if he was not against the current Church structures, he was against the idea that the new Pentecostal Church should in any way be organised.<sup>507</sup> Seymour rejected man's leadership roles by placing Christ at the Head of the Church. Many would agree with this idea since it is biblical, but Seymour claimed that Christ is the Bishop of the Church.<sup>508</sup> In January 1908, it is evident that there was to be no organisational structure in *The Apostolic Faith* missions: "Does any man control the missions of *The Apostolic Faith*? No; every mission will have its own leaders and teachers as the Holy Ghost shall appoint and teach the pure word of God."<sup>509</sup>

Less than a decade later, one sees that his attitude towards authority completely changed. He was now the only authority of his church and all others that would be birthed from it. The Constitution of the Apostolic Faith Mission placed a very strong emphasis on central authority. The bishop, William Seymour, possessed all power to add and remove people from leadership and membership.<sup>510</sup> What influenced Seymour's move toward such a strong Church structure? It was most likely the division of the church, many times by white leaders, that caused him to place himself as the indisputable leader of his flock.

## **8. Money – The Life of Faith**

During this period of time, many were teaching a radical commitment in terms of finances. The less a person had, the greater would be his faith and reliance upon God. Seymour seems to have taken a more middle-of-the-road approach:

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<sup>507</sup> William Seymour, *The Apostolic Faith*, November 1906, 2; Reprinted, 10.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid, May 1907, 3; Reprinted, 39.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid, January 1908, 2; Reprinted, 46.

<sup>510</sup> William Seymour. Edited by Larry Martin. *The Doctrines and Discipline*, 39.



There have been teachers who have told all the people to sell out, and many of them have gone into fanaticism. We let the Spirit lead people and tell them what they ought to give. When they get filled with the Spirit, their pocket books are converted and God makes them stewards and if He says, "Sell out," they will do so. But sometimes they have families. God does not tell you to forsake your family. He says if you do not provide for your own you are worse than an infidel."<sup>511</sup>

He went on to say that even though not every person was told to "sell out" to Christ, there were some that were given this honour; however, Seymour tempered this with a word of caution to those with dependents.

Bartleman was a man who lived by "faith," perhaps even more than Seymour. He spread the Pentecostal message by handing out tracts and preaching in the Los Angeles area. "Faith" meant that he did not take funds with him for his travels, but trusted God to provide.<sup>512</sup> This was one of the common Pentecostal teachings and can be readily found in the writings of Charles Parham. The theme of trusting God for all financial needs was very strong in the early Pentecostal Church. A parallel to this in the life of Thérèse would be her vow of poverty.

#### **9. Expected Imminent Return of Christ**

The return of Christ is a common theme amongst Pentecostals. Seymour wrote in January of 1907: "O the time is very near. All the testimonies of His coming that have been going on for months are a witness that He is coming soon."<sup>513</sup> This prophetic message is typical of Pentecostals. Along with the expected return of Christ is that by receiving the Holy Spirit one is "sealed" for the day of redemption.<sup>514</sup> The idea here is that one has been marked or identified as a child of God so that at the time of judgement one will be identified as one of God's own.

#### **10. Experiential Religion**

While the testimony of W.H. Durham has already been mentioned as concerns his comments about Seymour, his experience with God and the presence and power of God from early in the revival are also worth noting:

It seemed to me that my body had suddenly become porous, and that a current of electricity was being turned on me from all sides; and for two hours I lay under His mighty power... But on Friday evening, March 1, His mighty power came over me, until I jerked and quaked under it for about three hours...<sup>515</sup>

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<sup>511</sup> William Seymour, *The Apostolic Faith*, November 1906, 3; Reprinted, 11

<sup>512</sup> Bartleman, Frank. *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles, As it was in the Beginning*. (Los Angeles, Frank Bartleman, 1925), 25.

<sup>513</sup> William Seymour, *The Apostolic Faith*, January 1907, 2; Reprinted, 18.

<sup>514</sup> This doctrine can be traced to Charles Parham. Charles F. Parham. *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*. (Baxter Springs, Kansas: Apostolic Faith Bible College, 1910. Reprinted in 1978), 86.

<sup>515</sup> William Seymour, *The Apostolic Faith*, February-March 1907, 4; Reprinted, 24.

The experiential side of the Christian life is emphasised as well in *Doctrine and Disciplines*, addressing how one is assured of salvation. Strong emphasis is given to the idea of the new birth, which agrees with many evangelical Christians. Beyond this, there must be an experiential witness of the Holy Spirit that one is saved according to 1 John 5:10.<sup>516</sup> This experiential side of Christianity should be compared to Thérèse of Lisieux's experiences and also to what von Balthasar notes concerning her existentialism.

### **11. Healing in the Atonement**

Seymour took a strong stand concerning healing and the atonement: "Sickness and disease are destroyed through the precious atonement of Jesus...Not only is the atonement for the sanctification of our souls, but for the sanctification of our bodies from inherited disease."<sup>517</sup> One could discuss this issue at length, as it is still fiercely debated in Pentecostal circles today. This is also common ground for most Roman Catholics, who, although they would not ascribe to the theology of the early Pentecostals, pray and hope for miraculous healings.

### **12. Anti-medicine**

In a "Question and Answer" article during January of 1908, some new issues were discussed, including an anti-medicine stance. Seymour is not mentioned in this article, so it was probably written by one of the editors:

Do you teach that it is wrong to take medicine? Yes, for saints to take medicine. Medicine is for unbelievers, but the remedy for the saints of God we will find in Jas. 5:14...Does the Lord Jesus provide healing for everybody? Yes: for all those that have faith in Him. The sinner can receive healing.<sup>518</sup>

While it is unknown whether this was the personal view of Seymour, it was a common opinion of many early Pentecostals.

### **13. Speaking in Tongues for Missions**

In the early days, Pentecostals believed that speaking in tongues would be a tool to make missions easier. This goes hand in hand with the idea that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was for empowerment: "The baptism with the Holy Ghost makes you a witness unto the uttermost parts of the earth. It gives you power to speak in the languages of the nations."<sup>519</sup> Many people went to the mission field during this time without learning the local language. They believed that by speaking in tongues and having the "interpretation" they would be able to witness to the lost and evangelise the nations. Although

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<sup>516</sup> William Seymour. Edited by Larry Martin. *The Doctrines and Discipline*, 61-64.

<sup>517</sup> William Seymour, *The Apostolic Faith*, September 1906, 2; Reprinted, 2.

<sup>518</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, January 1908, 2; Reprinted, 46.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid, December 1906, 2; Reprinted, 14.



there are recorded events where evangelism took place as the result of someone speaking in tongues, this was the exception, not the rule. In time, this idea was set aside for obvious reasons. Today Pentecostal missionaries travel the world to share the gospel, but must first go to language school and learn the local language in the traditional way.

#### **14. Women in Ministry**

In Pentecostal denominations, women are allowed to preach, based on the inspiration of prophecy. The following was not written by Seymour, but was published in *The Apostolic Faith*: “It is the privilege of all the members of the bride of Christ to prophesy, which means testify or preach.”<sup>520</sup> The logic is more fully explained in the paragraph that follows: “...when our Lord poured out Pentecost, He brought all those faithful women with the other disciples into the upper room, and God baptised them all in the same room and made no difference. All the women received the anointed oil of the Holy Ghost and were able to preach the same as the men.”<sup>521</sup> While this is exegetically a stretch, it explains why women are allowed to preach in all Pentecostal circles. The outpouring of the Spirit was (and is) considered to be the great equaliser of the sexes. Many women became great leaders in the early days of the Pentecostal movement, often going out alone as missionaries, never to return home. The role of women in the Pentecostal movement merits a separate study. The connection as it relates to Thérèse is significant and should be explored.

#### **15. The Ordinance of Foot Washing**

Most Protestant Churches in America today recognise two ordinances of the Church—water baptism and Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper. Seymour stated that there was a third ordinance, foot washing. This was based on the passage in John 13 where Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Significant writings are dedicated to this aspect of worship and its liturgical format. Although foot washing is used occasionally and informally in some Protestant Churches, it is not considered an ordinance of the Church. Seymour regarded it as an important matter, but his views have not been adopted by the Pentecostal Church as a whole.

### **C. CHANGING VIEWS OF HOLINESS**

Less than ten years after the events of April 1906, one can see that strong cultural influences had taken root in the teaching and doctrine of William Seymour. The most significant change was from a racially integrated Church to one focused on ministry to blacks, requiring that all of the leaders of the

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<sup>520</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, January 1908, 2; Reprinted, 50.

church be black. The other key change was in the area of evidentiary tongues. Seymour initially agreed with the standard Pentecostal doctrine, but by the time his doctrine had solidified, he had adopted a more Charismatic position.

It is my opinion that the change from an integrated Church to one that permitted only black leaders was not brought about by a doctrinal change but, rather, from the cultural events of the day. Seymour reacted to the aggressive actions of certain whites who attempted to take control of the ministry on Azusa Street. It is a regrettable episode that took decades for the Pentecostal Church to first recognise as wrong and then correct.

The second changing view of holiness was doctrinal, the rejection of evidentiary tongues, and illustrated two things: first, the mixture of theological views presented by Seymour, who uncritically blended matters of justification with other matters of spiritual empowerment; second, a position lauded by Charismatics but rejected by Pentecostals. In either case, it was arrived at through an uncritical merger of Pauline and Lukan theologies. In my opinion, the divisive people contributed to Seymour's overreaction during this period. Rather than reject the offenders, he adjusted his theology to exclude them as leaders. Does this mean that Seymour no longer believed in speaking in tongues? No; but he no longer accepted the position of most Pentecostals—that speaking in tongues is the evidence, or proof, that one is baptised in the Holy Spirit.

Was Seymour still a Pentecostal? Not in the classical sense. He still believed in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but looked beyond tongues for a character that was impacted by the power of God. In other words, for Seymour speaking in tongues was not enough to prove one's holiness. In this regard, he should be commended. Holiness cannot be defined by merely outward actions; the motives of the heart must also be examined. The failure of some early Pentecostals to work towards a character that reflected Christ was justified by the fact that they "spoke in tongues." Speaking in tongues was given as proof that they were already holy, which in some cases was obviously not true. Seymour saw this error and challenged it.

#### **D. EARLY ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE REVIVAL**

As with Thérèse, most early writers failed to see the significance of their current leader. Very little was written about Seymour in the first decades following his life. We will examine the works available in terms of their comments about Seymour and his contributions to the 1906 revival.

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<sup>521</sup> *The Apostolic Faith*, 50.



### 1. Frank Bartleman (1925)

Bartleman proclaims Seymour the leader of the early meetings, but also says that many others were involved in leadership through the power of the Holy Spirit. He is critical of Seymour for “selling out” to the organised Church structure by allowing them to take control of the movement of the Spirit. Bartleman could have given more details about the division that was caused in the Church, ultimately resulting in the rejection of non-black leadership. It could be that he was part of the problem and therefore unwilling to discuss it. It is likely that Bartleman, like others, siphoned off members from Seymour’s church. His silence on racial issues that were obviously significant before Seymour wrote *Doctrines and Discipline* is unfortunate.

The remainder of the early sources have similar problems. Frodsham (1946), Gee (1949) and Winehouse (1959) all avoid the critical issues surrounding the formation of the Pentecostal movement. Its birth in a racially mixed church in Los Angeles should have been a major point of focus, but it is not. Seymour’s theological changes should have been mentioned as well, but they are not. These men were hindered either by cultural forces or fear of reprisal for speaking the truth.

### 2. A.C. Valdez (1980)<sup>522</sup>

Valdez makes a lengthy comparison to the established churches in Los Angeles at the time of the Azusa revival. Obviously, his perspective as a follower of Pentecostal doctrine would bias him against the established churches. In describing the Pentecostal Church, he writes that the buildings, sermons, value of scripture, eschatology, faith, and God’s provision are different when compared to the established churches.<sup>523</sup>

For Valdez, the holy life is attained by “walking in the Spirit,” according to Galatians 5: “*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*” (Galatians 5:16 AV). Valdez uses the phrase, “live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and keep filled with the Spirit...By living in the Spirit, we learn of our own free will to say ‘no’ to the Devil and ‘yes’ to God.”<sup>524</sup> The emphasis on the difference between the Azusa Mission and the established churches is, according to him, the work of the Spirit.

### 3. *Doctrines and Discipline* (1915 reissued in 2000)

Larry Martin has provided a great service to the church at large in endeavouring to preserve, archive and publish documents related to the Azusa revival. Although not written to academic standards

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<sup>522</sup> Although published in 1980, Valdez was an eye-witness of the Azusa revival.

<sup>523</sup> A.C. Valdez. *Fire on Azusa Street*. (Costa Mesa, California: Gift Publications, 1980), 79-84.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid, 85.

(for example, his version of *Doctrines and Discipline*), he has given the public several beneficial books. By his own admission, Martin extensively edited the 2000 version of *Doctrines and Discipline*.<sup>525</sup> I spoke with him on April 26, 2006, in Los Angeles and asked about his rationale for this. He explained that it was merely for organisational reasons and to make the book more reader-friendly for his audience. By making the general public more aware of William Seymour, he has rendered a valuable service. The problem, historically speaking, is not so much the version's minor grammatical changes, but in its order having been rearranged. Once this process begins, it is harder to ascertain any of the *Doctrine and Discipline*'s original meaning.

The most significant area of concern is that large sections were moved from one place to another with no notice provided to the reader. This incorrectly gives the reader the impression that he has a copy of the original words and context of William Seymour, which is not accurate. One of the major modifications is that the book begins on page 12 (of the original text) with the "Apostolic Address and History." The seven previous pages have been moved to later in the book. Again, the question is why. By moving sections and adding subject headings, certain ideas are given more force than they have in the original writings by Seymour.

It is possible that Martin moved the section on divorce further back in the book, from page 14 to page 116, to make it less prominent and thus more palatable in today's culture. It is also possible that he took two sections on speaking in tongues that were not even in sections and created sections, "Speaking in Tongues" and "The Gift of Tongues,"<sup>526</sup> to highlight Seymour's rejection of Pentecostal doctrine. Neither of these actions, however, is that helpful. The book speaks for itself and would have been better left unaltered. Admittedly, Seymour was not analytical in deciding the order of his book, but Martin's version must not be considered an unedited work by Seymour.

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<sup>525</sup> Larry Martin, Preface. William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline* (2000), 22-23.

<sup>526</sup> William Seymour, Edited by Larry Martin, *Doctrines and Discipline*. (Joplin, Missouri: Christian Life Books, 2000), 81-82.



# CHAPTER 6 – A COMPARISON OF EARLY AND LATE VIEWS OF WILLIAM J. SEYMOUR

## INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to examine the life of William Seymour without viewing it within the cultural context of twentieth-century America. At the time of the revival, racism in most of America was the norm. One example of this is the camp meeting held in Arroyo Seco, near Pasadena, California, in 1913, of which there had been two previously, in 1907 and 1908. The crowds were upwards of 2,000, according to the secular press. Seymour, however, was neither mentioned nor invited to participate. When he died of a heart attack in 1922, it went unacknowledged by those who owed so much to his ministry. In the end, the secular press that had been so ready to ridicule him did not even publish his passing. Seymour was excluded from the very ministry into which he had breathed life, and his late ministry and death went unnoticed by the larger circle of ministers in the United States.

Robeck correctly observes that Seymour was not honoured with a place of prominence in the movement and passed away in relative obscurity. However, to say that he is not remembered as the leader of the Azusa Revival is not accurate, at least insofar as concerns the Assemblies of God. While there were certainly some who chose to disregard Seymour, his place in history is assured and was as early as the decade following the revival.

## I. EARLY SEYMOUR

### A. THE HISTORICAL RECORD

In the early days of the Pentecostal movement, some failed to recognise Seymour's role at Azusa. In an August 1907 article, G.B. Cashwell's ministry is noted at length, with no mention of Seymour. It is highly unlikely that the writer was unaware of Seymour's position. Others also highlighted the start of the revival yet failed to mention Seymour. However, the Assemblies of God chronicles with good accuracy the events of Azusa Street. In *The Pentecostal Evangel*, at that time called *The Weekly Evangel*, which was the AoG publication, Seymour is referenced many times. *The Weekly Evangel* ran a series of articles, beginning in January 1916, which retraced the history of the Pentecostal movement. These 13 articles, entitled "Apostolic Faith Restored," spanned from January 1 to April 15. Seymour is mentioned many times and always as the leader of the Azusa Revival. He is again mentioned in articles published in 1923, 1925, 1933, 1936, and 1939. I was actually surprised by the number of times he is noted in the *The Weekly*

*Evangel*.<sup>527</sup> Even at this early date, there is no question that, historically, Seymour was considered the head of the Azusa Revival and that this revival is recognised by the AoG as the igniting point of their own worldwide Pentecostal movement.

It is possible that he was given less importance in the decade prior to the Civil Rights Movement, but one cannot claim that Seymour was not given his place in history by the Assemblies of God, headquartered in Springfield, Missouri, as the leader of the Azusa Revival. The information provided in the previous paragraphs shows that historically his place is assured. But it is also possible that in the 1950s few were willing to lionise this black leader prior to the changes brought about by the Civil Rights Movement. Support for this can be found in the formation of a museum located in the Assemblies of God headquarters. In 1989, the AoG opened this museum highlighting the history and growth of the movement. It was not until 1999, however, when a refurbished museum was opened that the contribution of Seymour was recognised.

From early articles in AoG's *The Weekly Evangel* and the work of Frank Bartleman, it is apparent that a deliberate effort was made to minimise Charles Parham's contributions. The obvious motive for this was embarrassment over his alleged moral failure and subsequent reluctance to name him as a father of the movement. Recently, as well as possibly at the midpoint of the past century, Parham has become more widely acknowledged.

Attending the centennial celebration of the Azusa Revival in Los Angeles in April 2006, I was struck by the number of times Seymour's visage was publicised, both in print and video form. Even though his link to the Azusa Revival is historical fact, Robeck contends that Seymour died in anonymity, which may well be the case. For while the historical records of the AoG refer to him as a person of importance in the Azusa Revival, one cannot help but wonder how Seymour ended up marginalised by some as the movement advanced. The racist motivation behind his diminished role is clear, as supported by the previous chapter.

## **B. THEOLOGICAL DISPUTES**

To a large extent, the Pentecostal movement endeavoured to remain connected to the Holiness movement. There was an almost even divide between those who would remain loyal to the teachings of Wesley and those who would not. For Holiness churches, the key to being "baptised in the Holy Spirit"

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<sup>527</sup> *The Pentecostal Evangel* (current name) was initially called *The Weekly Evangel* in 1916. By 1923, the name was changed to *The Pentecostal Evangel*, the editor was Stanley H. Frodsham, and the place of



was first to be sanctified. This kept Seymour and other groups within the holiness doctrine. The AoG, however, followed the teaching of William Durham, who discarded the need for sanctification and proceeded directly from salvation to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Again, according to his theology, sanctification took place at salvation. With the AoG rapidly increasing in size and becoming the most prominent Pentecostal movement worldwide, this theological shift ultimately usurped Seymour's holiness ideology. The 1916 statement of doctrine for the AoG intentionally kept the statement about sanctification vague to avoid offending those with a Wesleyan leaning. But in 1961, the AoG revised the phrase from "entire sanctification" to "sanctification," thereby clarifying their position.<sup>528</sup> By removing the word "entire," the AoG separated itself from the Wesleyan position that one can be completely sanctified, made holy, in this life.

### **C. RACISM IN ASCENDENCY**

The issue of segregation and racism was immensely important in the formation, growth and expansion of the Pentecostal movement. It would be prudent here to identify the forces that contributed to racial segregation in the first place. Following the Civil War, most people accepted former slaves as free men. Why, then, was it not possible to integrate whites and blacks within the same churches? Initially, some integration occurred. However, the number of blacks in most churches, especially in the South, was much larger than whites, and so, ironically, whites began to resent being the minority. Meanwhile, blacks resented the all-white rule that dominated these integrated churches. Thus as early as 1870, black denominations were formed to meet the demand for segregated churches: "...by 1929 church membership reports showed that 90 percent of all black Christians belonged to churches restricted to their own race."<sup>529</sup> It could be said that prior to the Civil Rights Movement this fact was simply ignored by historians.

By looking at the formation of the various Pentecostal denominations, one can see a clear picture of the racial issue. One of the central figures was Charles H. Mason, an African-American who travelled to Los Angeles, in March 1907, where he experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As cofounder of the

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publication had been moved to Springfield, Missouri, its current location. The chairman of the Assemblies of God General Council remained E.N. Bell.

<sup>528</sup> William Menzies. "Defending the Faith," 48-52. *Assemblies of God Heritage*. Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, (Volume 27, 2007), 51.

<sup>529</sup> Synan, 168.

Church of God in Christ<sup>530</sup> (1895), his openness to the Pentecostal message influenced many of his followers. A tremendous revival took place in his movement, after a split with the other founder, so much so that this Church experienced amazing growth and was in 1946 numbered at 200,000, with 1,200 churches. According to Vinson Synan (2001), COGIC is today the largest Pentecostal denomination in North America, with six-million members (primarily black), nearly double the membership of the Assemblies of God (AoG), a mostly white denomination, which was formed in 1914 at Hot Springs, Arkansas.<sup>531</sup>

*The Assemblies of God* by Winehouse (1959) is an important work, in that it purports to be the first written history of the AoG movement. J. Roswell Flower<sup>532</sup> in his introduction emphasised: "This is the first time that an attempt has been made to compile information in any detail to tell the story of the Assemblies of God."<sup>533</sup> Flower also noted: "It was not until 1913 that any determined effort was made for coordination of effort in an organised fellowship."<sup>534</sup> The impression given is that there was no structure to the Pentecostal churches formed between the start of the revival in 1906 and the formation of the AoG in 1914. Winehouse overlooks any mention of the numerous individuals already credentialed by COGIC and the other Holiness/Pentecostal denominations already in existence. In actual fact, E.N. Bell, a member of COGIC, was the first General Superintendent of the AoG.

More openly, Vinson Synan, a respected Pentecostal Holiness leader and historian, concludes in *The Century of the Holy Spirit* (2001) that the formation of the AoG was, on some level, racial. His argument is that C.H. Mason in leading the COGIC had encouraged his churches to have mixed congregations, similar to the work of Seymour, with both black and white pastors: "Many of those forming the AoG were white pastors who had been affiliated with Mason and his church. Many had

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<sup>530</sup> This denomination, also known by the acronym COGIC, was one of the many Holiness denominations formed during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Many of these groups accepted the teaching of Pentecostalism.

<sup>531</sup> Because the AoG is my own denominational affiliation, careful attention must be given so as not to be biased against or for the organisation based on personal partiality.

<sup>532</sup> J. Roswell Flower was one of the influential early leaders of the early Assemblies of God. In 1914, he was chosen at the first AoG General Council meeting as secretary-treasurer of the denomination. His magazine, *Christian Evangel*, became the denomination's official magazine. His influence continued in the organisation until he retired in 1959. His wife, Alice, was also a contributing writer to the *Pentecostal Evangel* magazine and author of several books, and was very influential in her own right.

<sup>533</sup> J. Roswell Flower, Introduction. Irwin Winehouse. *The Assemblies of God: A Popular Survey*. (New York: Vantage Press, First Edition, 1959), 13.

<sup>534</sup> Winehouse, 11.



carried credentials of the Church of God in Christ provided by Mason...In a sense, the organisation of the AoG was in part a racial separation from Mason's church."<sup>535</sup>

The issue of race implicit in the formation of the AoG and the withdrawal of most white ministers from COGIC is a sad reflection of the racial problems of the day. Looking back, this was indeed indefensible, but it must also be viewed in its cultural context. Some would argue that separation was unavoidable under the Jim Crow Laws of the South. This is only true, however, when one blindly accepts a statute that is legal but not moral.

In 1914,<sup>536</sup> another Pentecost denomination was formed, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAoW).<sup>537</sup> The organisation was originally integrated, but became more and more a black group as time progressed. From 1914 to 1922, the PAoW functioned as an integrated church in the North and East. During the Oneness<sup>538</sup> controversy, the PAoW sided with the "Jesus only" doctrine and tensions arose as time passed; in 1924 a split occurred between white and black pastors. MacRobert says that a few white ministers stayed in the PAoW—they were but a small minority. His criticism is most likely true, but he does not take into account the cultural issue of the Jim Crow laws in the South.

The Pentecostal Holiness Church and the Church of God also began as integrated denominations. The leader of the Church of God, Tomlinson, succumbed to Southern pressure to segregate in 1912. In 1926, the black pastors requested their own general assembly. It is interesting to note that this separate arrangement was agreed to with the stipulation that the "overseer" of the denomination be a white man. The Church of God functioned in this manner until 1966 and was the only major white Pentecostal denomination to have a black branch as a part of its movement. The Pentecostal Holiness Church also held integrated meetings, but only until 1908, when the blacks appealed to form their own denomination.

There is also an aspect of racism that was seemingly endorsed by the AoG at that time. By permitting his racist views to be printed in *The Weekly Evangel*, the AoG unofficially approved of Parham's lieutenant, W.F. Carothers, an AoG presbyter:

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<sup>535</sup> Synan. *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 124, 125. Earlier in the book Synan states that the number of adherents is larger than the membership, about ten million more around the world, see page 6.

<sup>536</sup> There is some disagreement on the date of the formation of this organisation. I am following Synan on this date because of his recognised scholarship.

<sup>537</sup> The PAoW is not to be confused with the Assemblies of God (AoG).

<sup>538</sup> The Oneness problem came to the forefront during a campmeeting in Los Angeles in 1913 following the teaching of Frank J. Ewart. It also went by the name "Pentecostal Unitarian" and encouraged people to be rebaptised "in Jesus' name." The question was whether a person should be baptised in the name of Jesus alone or according to the Trinitarian formula. The Assemblies of God was split by this issue at its General Council in 1916.

And his purpose to preserve the racial purity and integrity of the different nations he [God] had made is plainly indicated by His appointment of the bounds of their habitation. Nor would there ever be any "race question" if men would but observe the divine arrangement and live, each nation in his own country, even as each family should live in its own separate home...A proper separation of the races, looking to the integrity of each, is no more "prejudice" than is a proper separation of the sexes. Both alike are but the dictates of common decency and of a wholesome regard for the decrees of the almighty.<sup>539</sup>

Carothers rejected the possibility of whites living in harmony with blacks. He also alleged, "...the Pentecostal people of the South...have not the slightest prejudice or lack of divine love for the coloured people..."<sup>540</sup> In the end, this latter statement would ring hollow because his prejudice was so obvious. Whether deliberate or not, these comments as published in a national journal of the AoG implied that, to some degree, the denomination was, at that time, in accord with at least some of the racist views of the day.

It is unfortunately true that for almost 50 years the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) was excluded from the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA). In fact, none of the black denominations were invited to join when it was formed in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1948. By 1965, there were 17 denominations in the PFNA, but none were black. Contrast this to black churches that were members of the World Pentecostal Conference (WPC) when it was formed in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1947. In recent decades, Pentecostals have acknowledged this error and have made efforts to heal old wounds between blacks and whites, a process of reconciliation which continues today.<sup>541</sup> Nonetheless, the fact that blacks were excluded from fellowship in such an obvious way is disappointing, to say the least.

It is my opinion that the majority of white ministers in the South accepted the Jim Crow Laws and, inwardly at least, believed whites to be superior on some level to blacks. It is only an academic question now, but how would racism in America be today had the white Pentecostal churches stayed united with their black brothers and sisters and worked to end racial discrimination at the beginning of the movement?

It is also not mere coincidence that the PFNA was formed in the same year that Apartheid began in South Africa. A link exists between early Pentecostals and the policies in South Africa via John G. Lake, who travelled there after having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Azusa in 1908: "Lake has the dubious distinction of introducing the South African Parliament to the idea of segregation laws

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<sup>539</sup> W.F. Carothers. "Attitude of Pentecostal Whites to the Coloured Brethren in the South." *The Weekly Evangel* (August 14, 1915), 2.

<sup>540</sup> W.F. Carothers, *The Weekly Evangel* (August 14, 1915), 2.

<sup>541</sup> Synan, 5, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 182.



that developed into Apartheid.”<sup>542</sup> Ironically, even though he communicated the ideology of separation to political leaders in South Africa, Lake did not adhere to it in his own church where, according to Butler, he treated blacks as equals. Even so, by 1917 blacks and whites in South Africa were worshipping in separate groups. I am confident that with today’s understanding of Apartheid’s atrocities, the connection between Azusa Street and such malevolent policies would have grieved Seymour, who so openly strove for integration.

How does racial discrimination fit into the subject of holiness? The rampant racism in America which was present at the beginning of the twentieth century is an illustration of cultural influence on holiness leading to a constructed holiness. It may also be an example of what many conservative Evangelicals would disagree with: that some teachings of the Bible conflict with the progressive revelation given to the Church and that God is still revealing His truth to the Church. The Old Testament obviously approves of and defines slavery, while the New Testament never forbids it or works to remove it. While in modern culture, slavery is seen as a clear abuse of another child of God. Clearly, many followers of the Holiness doctrine were blinded to their own prejudice by cultural norms.

Although racism was not addressed by Thérèse, there was a parallel cultural issue at work in her life. Nineteenth-century France witnessed a cultural blindness in the Catholic Church to the plight of the poor and its rejection of the demands of socialism. Although this attitude can be somewhat justified within the cultural context of the time, one should always be able to recognise Christians as liberators of the oppressed.

#### **D. A SUMMARY OF EARLY PENTECOSTAL PIETY**

The Azusa Revival began in racial unity and later divided, as personalities, theology and personal ambitions took their toll. In the beginning years, speaking in tongues was seen as the evidence of Spirit baptism. Seymour changed his position over time and became what would be considered today as more “Charismatic” in his theology. Speaking in tongues was viewed as a sign or one of the gifts of the Spirit, but not the only evidence of the baptism. Russell P. Spittler, a well-known Assemblies of God theologian, lists the primary practices of Pentecostal spirituality: “speaking in tongues, the baptism of the Holy Spirit...prayer for divine healing...collective oral prayer...fasting...the raising of hands...proxy prayer...laying on of hands...dancing in the Spirit...falling under the power...sacred expletives...holy

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<sup>542</sup> Butler, 14.

laughter...exorcisms...visions...inner healing.”<sup>543</sup> Dependence on scripture for all early Pentecostals was clear, along with prayer, holy living and the rejection of the organised Church. This last point was also important to Seymour in the beginning, but less so as time passed. Holy living was demonstrated by the keeping of marriage vows, temperance and an anti-tobacco stance. Healing was provided for in the atonement; thus the use of medicine was discouraged. A life of faith was central to the early Pentecostal movement, and they trusted God for provision. Pentecostals were experiential in their religion and awaited the imminent return of Christ. In the formative years, speaking in tongues was viewed as a call to missions and a means to communicate the Gospel to the heathen. Women were prominent in ministry and were permitted to preach without reservation. Seymour considered foot washing an ordinance of the Church, a view not adopted by many other Pentecostal groups of the day. Over the past one hundred years, views with regard to holiness have continued to evolve. Next, we will examine some of the current attitudes towards Seymour and the piety he represented.

## **II. HOLINESS IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

### **A. RACISM IN DECLINE**

Many of the following themes have already been examined, but should be seen again from a contemporary perspective. The obvious reason for the resurgence of Seymour's popularity in more recent years is the decline of racism in America, especially since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Like a fatal infection fought by potent antibiotics, so racism in America has been battled by civil rights leaders. Individuals such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Thurgood Marshall brought the plight of African Americans to the forefront. King's support of non-violent civil disobedience allowed blacks to effectively capture the nation's attention.

The low point of racism, or the high point of prejudice, insofar as the Pentecostal Church, occurred in 1948, during the formation of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA). As mentioned, black Pentecostal groups were not invited to join the organisation and if they made application, they were ignored. Some argue that black churches were invited, but chose not to join.

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<sup>543</sup> Russell Spittler. "Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic." In *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. (Revised Edition), (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 1099-1102.



Regardless, it is clear that black Pentecostals were not welcome, especially when the PFNA is compared to the WPC.<sup>544</sup>

It was not until October 17, 1994, that redress was made for racial wrongs of the past. Cecil M. Robeck addressed the PFNA, speaking on the topic of racial unity present in the initial meetings at Azusa Street and on the encroachment of the Jim Crow Laws on the interracial fellowship which had begun. The membership of the PFNA voted to dissolve its racist organisation and form a new integrated group, the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA). Bishop Ithiel Clemmons, a black leader, was elected its first president.<sup>545</sup> On that day, a white pastor washed the feet of Bishop Clemmons, and so began the long process of reparations for the transgressions of former days.

The problem of racism as it spread around the world provided an appalling depiction of holiness or, as I call it, Constructed Piety. Seymour early on recognised the need to eliminate racial barriers in Christianity. Enoch Oglesby reflects on the cultural implications of racism and concludes: "The overarching task is nothing less than to bring the corpus of ethical reflection to bear upon the reality of cultural racism and to discover functional values which have the moral impetus to eradicate all forms of racial prejudice and institutional oppression."<sup>546</sup> The ethical imperative to do away with racism should concern all Christians, as it is a reflection of true holiness. Christ was the Great Leveller—removing boundaries of race, economics and gender.

## **B. HOLINESS AND PENTECOSTAL ROOTS**

### **1. Wesleyan Roots**

Kendrick, in his 1961 book *The Promise Fulfilled*, made one of the first efforts to trace the history of the Pentecostal movement. His connection to the AoG is evident and he makes a strong case for the relationship between Pentecostalism and Wesleyan Methodism. He also notes the relationship between Wesley and Arminianism.<sup>547</sup> Several elements connect these two traditions: the teaching of complete sanctification: a crisis experience, a toleration of speaking in tongues, a literal interpretation of scripture, and the use of the phrase "baptism in the Holy Spirit" to describe the experience of sanctification.

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<sup>544</sup> Anthea Butler. "Walls of Division: Racism's Role in Pentecostal History". *Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15 (1994), 1-18, 17.

<sup>545</sup> Sheri Benvenuti. "Pentecostal Racial Reconciliation: Let Justice Roll Down.". *Society of Pentecostal Studies* 6 (1999), 1-31, 6.

<sup>546</sup> Enoch Oglesby. "Reflections on Cultural Racism: The Theoretical Task of the Black Ethicist." *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 3(1975-1976) 40-48, 45.

<sup>547</sup> Klaude Kendrick. *The Promise Fulfilled: A History of the Modern Pentecostal Movement*. (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 39.

Unfortunately, Kendrick, published before the Civil Rights Movement, failed to recognise the revolutionary social implications of the Azusa Revival with its egalitarian racial relationships.

John Nichol suggests that the influences in Pentecostalism went beyond that of Wesley and Methodism and correctly connects Pentecostalism to the Reformation through its emphasis on scripture and salvation by grace through faith, although this was part of Wesley's teaching. Dayton (1987) also credits the Wesleyan-Holiness movement for the basic foundation of the Pentecostalism and then goes beyond the Holiness tradition to examine contributions from the Reformed, Evangelical and Higher Life<sup>548</sup> movements. The latter was surely responsible for the rejection of sanctification as a completed, instantaneous work.

Pentecostals are unique from other Protestants in areas such as seeking the leading of the Spirit, a focus on primitive Christianity, adult baptism, and the imminent return of Christ.<sup>549</sup> While these are certainly important aspects of Pentecostalism, the heart of Pentecostalism is the second (or third) work of grace that speaks of a crisis experience leading to an infusion of power, that is, the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Such is the central distinctive of Pentecostalism that ties it more directly to the teachings of Wesley. Both Parham and Seymour came out of the Holiness movement; Seymour's commitment to holiness caused him to reject the influences and ideas that formed later groups such as the AoG.

Vinson Synan makes an important point in proposing that because of Wesley's education and training he was more "Anglo-Catholic" than "Reformed Protestant." In fact, the significance of Arminian thought in Methodism produced a reaction against Calvin's teaching. The contrast between Calvinism and Methodism is stark: Calvinists teach that a limited number are the elect, whereas Methodism states that anyone can be saved. A Calvinist never truly knows if he is one of the elect; a Methodist knows for certain, as the religious experience offers proof of salvation.

## **2. The Work of the Holy Spirit**

Another view concerning the origins of the Pentecostal movement requires a position of faith, viewing its beginnings as the "outpouring of the Spirit" promised in Joel and in the New Testament's prophetic anticipation of Christ's second coming. This is the view held by men such as Stanley E. Frodsham and Frank Bartleman. In this regard, the Pentecostal movement is considered as not having a man at its head, but a group of people led by the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>548</sup> The "higher life" movement, also known by the name Keswick, strove to motivate people to a deeper walk with God and was led by such individuals as Andrew Murray.

<sup>549</sup> John Thomas Nichol. *Pentecostalism*. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), 3.



The Pentecostal movement's rapid growth is described by Peter Hocken as something only God could have done: "...the Azusa events had the theophanic character of a spontaneous revival that caught fire and spread beyond all organisational control." Thus Seymour cannot be viewed as the founder, although he did play a key role. In my opinion, Hocken's views closely resemble those of Frodsham and Bartleman concerning its godly origins as "an outbreak, a happening."<sup>550</sup>

Leonard Lovett, an African-American theologian, rejects this view, saying that it fails to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit works through people. Lovett's goal is to project the leadership on to Seymour and diminish the idea that the Holy Spirit played the central role in choosing the movement's leaders and locations.<sup>551</sup> Although he rightly notes that the Holy Spirit works through individuals, his not-so-hidden agenda to put the leadership of the Pentecostal movement solely on the shoulders of one black American is far too limiting, considering the vast scope of the revival and its amazing worldwide influence. Lovett's views will be examined next.

### **3. African Folk Religions**

A disparate view that has grown over time finds its origins in the black community during the 1970s, with two black scholars, James Tinney and Leonard Lovett. According to these men, the Pentecostal movement began amongst the poor, black, Holiness believers in Los Angeles, and William Seymour is indisputably the leader. Further, the movement was impacted by the forces of American slavery, as well as the customs of West African folk religions. In the 1980s, Seymour's role was expanded by Douglas Nelson and Iain MacRobert. Agreeing with Lovett and Tinney, Seymour not Parham is purported as the founder of the Pentecostal movement. Even more, the central theme of Pentecostalism is an egalitarian community in which the walls of race, gender and class differences are removed by the blood of Christ. In black churches, one can note an emphasis on community over the individual. This group relationship is a connecting point between black Pentecostalism and the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, where one can also find an emphasis on the community.

MacRobert describes the dehumanising conditions of slaves transported to America. They were summarily stripped of their culture, held without regard to "sex, age, family or tribe," forbidden to use their native language, and were intentionally separated from people groups to diminish any likelihood of cultural retention. Yet, in spite of such deplorable treatment, he agrees with Lovett that remnants of

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<sup>550</sup> Peter Hocken. "Baptism in the Spirit as Prophetic Statement: A Reflection on the New Testament and on Pentecostal Origins." *Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15 (1992), 1-22, 13, 20.

African folk religions came to America through the *diaspora*. While no longer in their original form, they were adapted to the new culture.

Lovett, as with most others, recognises that many Pentecostals credit the Holiness movement and therefore Wesley as having shaped Pentecostalism. His primary contribution is identifying the survival of African customs in the black churches of North America and suggests that various African traditions—the sacred dance, spirit possession, call and response, and *glossolalia*—have cultural predecessors in African folk religions.<sup>552</sup>

Primarily in West and Central Africa, mankind was viewed as deeply involved and related to the spirit world, even in everyday life. It is this deeply spiritualistic view, which invited the spirit world to invade all of life, that Western religions rejected. Generally, Western Pentecostals would discard the comparison of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, a positive moral and ethical influence, with African spirit possession, an amoral spiritual power.<sup>553</sup>

Lovett should be lauded for highlighting the plight of the black slaves and their desire for an experiential faith in lieu of a cold, intellectual ascent to statements of faith. One should also note the connection between the role of freedom from sin (sanctification) and the slave's desire for freedom from captivity. Freedom from slavery and sin were often preached and were the focal point in black churches prior to the Azusa Revival. An interesting parallel can be seen between the struggle of blacks in America and the plight of workers in nineteenth-century France. The difference is that, in most cases, oppressed blacks looked to God for deliverance while oppressed workers in France looked to socialism.

Martin Millner in his 2001 essay for the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* extensively criticises Blumhofer, Cerillo and others for not taking into account the “oneness” stream of theological development and its growth as a movement against black oppression. The key question, according to Millner, is this: Would the Pentecostal revival have happened without William Seymour and the Azusa Revival? Further, he asks: “... Would Pentecostalism and Apostolicism have emerged without slave Christianity?”<sup>554</sup> In my opinion, the second question is more important than the first, as I would propose that for most black Pentecostals it is impossible to imagine Pentecost without the influence of slavery. The

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<sup>551</sup> Leonard Lovett. “Perspective on the Black Origins of the Contemporary Pentecostal Movement.” *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Centre* 1 (1973): 36-49, 44.

<sup>552</sup> Leonard Lovett. *Black Holiness-Pentecostalism: Implications for Ethics and Social Transformation*. (Atlanta, Georgia: Dissertation, 1978), 20, 21.

<sup>553</sup> MacRobert, 12, 91.

<sup>554</sup> Martin Millner. “Ancestral Spirits and African American Apostolicism: Revisiting the Origins, Development and Future of Black Oneness Pentecostalism in Light of Africentric Theory.” 555.



were encouraged to find ordination in the black “sister organisation,” the Church of God in Christ.<sup>556</sup> In the 1940s, there were numerous attempts in the AoG to develop a ministry to reach out to the black community, but they were generally not met with enthusiasm.

In due course, small acts were organised in the 1950s to demonstrate a deepening of relationship between the AoG and COGIC. Eventually, as support for the Civil Rights Movement grew, the General Council of the Assemblies of God in 1965 adopted a resolution to support it. In reality, however, integration of blacks into this mostly white denomination continues to be limited. Five years after the above resolution was passed, outreaches began in various inner-cities. At the seventy-fifth anniversary of the AoG in 1989, racism was officially labelled a sin, along with hatred of Jews, Arabs and African Americans. Today there are thriving, racially-integrated congregations in the AoG; however, such are the exception and not the rule.

Although, in my opinion, it would be rare to find an AoG church that deliberately excludes non-whites, the denomination to this day has a primarily white constituency. Although many states or regions have initiated outreaches to other racial groups, the Southern California region of the AoG<sup>557</sup> being one of the leaders in this effort, the majority of these congregations are comprised of a particular ethnicity and not a broad spectrum of racially-integrated members. In this sense, for the majority of AoG adherents today, piety takes place in a racially-segregated setting. For many it is not something they have purposed; it is rather the result of tradition or cultural norms through the generations. Much more research could be done on the progress of integration in the various regions within the American AoG tradition.

An important event took place at the General Council of the Assemblies of God on August 12, 2007, in Indianapolis, Indiana, when the first African American, Zollie Smith Jr., was elected to one of the six executive positions of the AoG, U.S. Missions. Smith had already served as director of the Black Fellowship of the AoG and as an executive presbyter, so his election to this new post was not a complete surprise. In my opinion, this appointment could possibly mark a change in attitude and/or possibly a change in constituency from the racist beginnings of the movement. One could possibly conclude as well that a majority of the voting members (AoG pastors and delegates) now believe that whites and blacks *can*

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<sup>556</sup> Edit Blumhofer. *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 247.

<sup>557</sup> These various congregations are excerpted from an extensive list of new church plants in the Southern California area amongst the Assemblies of God, and were obtained from the district official who oversaw church planting until 2007, Dr. David Gable. It should also be noted that this is my home district as an AoG ordained minister.

worship in unity, a possible fulfilment of Seymour's prophetic vision more than a hundred years after the start of the revival.

#### **D. HOLINESS AND INITIAL PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

It has already been illustrated how Seymour shifted his position from his early to later years of ministry (1906 to 1915). In the beginning, he followed the teaching of his mentor, Charles Parham, who believed that speaking in tongues was the "Bible evidence" of being baptised in the Holy Spirit. In his later published works, he stated that speaking in tongues was *one* of the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit, as defined by 1 Corinthians 12. It is possible that Seymour's opinion began to change as early as the spring of 1907 in reaction to Parham's harsh words and rejection the previous fall. By the end of that year, Seymour replaced the words "Bible evidence" with phrases related to the gifts of the Spirit. It could be said that he linked the idea of "annihilation," taught by Parham, with "Bible evidence." If this is true, then Seymour made a significant theological and logical error. Parham was unquestionably out of evangelical orthodoxy in his claim of the "annihilation of the wicked," but not with "Bible evidence." Although for some groups the annihilation of the wicked is a theological alternative, it is rejected by all Pentecostals. Due to Parham's theological errors, Seymour concluded that one could hold false doctrine and still speak in tongues. Thus for Seymour speaking in tongues was not proof that one was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Seymour connected the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the atonement. By so doing, he completely removed himself from the Pentecostal position. In my opinion, he confused the need for the Holy Spirit at conversion with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit given later. As has already been stated, he commingled Lukan and Pauline pneumatology. Whereas Paul never mentions the baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit in his writings, Luke mentions it numerous times, even in his Gospel. For Paul, the importance of the Holy Spirit is more often connected with the new birth; for Luke, the Holy Spirit produces prophetically-inspired speech. Although Paul lists the gifts of the Spirit, he never mentions a second crisis experience in his epistles.

Was there a possible third option that simply was not considered? Bob Caldwell traces the early history of the development of the doctrine of "Bible evidence" in a paper presented to the Society for Pentecostal Studies. Caldwell states there were only two possible options at the time of the formation of the major Pentecostal denominations: first, speaking in tongues was the "Bible evidence" of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and was available to all; and second, rejection of "Bible evidence" and the idea that all could speak in tongues. He then proposes a third possibility: "There may be no physical evidence, but all



Spirit-baptised believers can speak in tongues for their own edification.”<sup>558</sup> By rejecting “Bible evidence,” he maintains that all believers can speak in tongues, but that it is not mandatory. Caldwell’s third perspective sounds remarkably close to Seymour’s position, that speaking in tongues is *one* of the signs of Spirit baptism.

Is it possible that the Pentecostal movement followed the teaching of Parham simply because a better option was not suggested? In order for a doctrinal statement to be received by the larger group of those who believe in the operation of spiritual gifts, a broader definition would need to be provided. Caldwell’s suggested alternative may agree with Seymour. They both have rejected evidentiary tongues, yet continue to see the value of speaking in tongues—not as proof of baptism, but as a possible result thereof. This view would be accepted by most Charismatics, but not by classic Pentecostals, who would consider it not a third option but a rejection of evidentiary tongues.

## **E. HOLINESS AND RESTORATIONIST THEMES**

The well-known AoG historian Edith Blumhofer<sup>559</sup> focuses on the Restorationist<sup>560</sup> themes in Seymour’s teachings, themes not new with Seymour or Parham but common at the turn of the last century. Blumhofer defines Restorationism as “the attempt to recapture the presumed vitality, message, and form of the Apostolic Church.”<sup>561</sup> Grant Wacker labels this “primitivism.”<sup>562</sup> In an ahistorical way, the Church was called to return to the perfection of the first century, which included an inter-denominational unity, a destiny-centred eschatology and a rejection of all denominationalism.<sup>563</sup>

What is notable is that the Restorationist themes of the Azusa Revival survived and expanded worldwide with great force. Blumhofer suggests that the reason for the success of this vision for many groups was because “their restorationist inclinations had already prompted their separation from the

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<sup>558</sup> Bob Caldwell. “Were There Early Alternatives to Initial Evidence?” 1. *Society for Pentecostal Studies* 10 (2004) 1-15

<sup>559</sup> Blumhofer is an excellent scholar and analytical thinker; however, she makes a minor historical error in describing Seymour’s baptism in the Holy Spirit, stating that he was baptised in the Holy Spirit on April 9. This does not agree with other historical data, which would point to his baptism being a few days later on April 12. This small point aside, she can be considered a valuable source of information and analysis for the period.

<sup>560</sup> The idea of Restorationism is a return to the practices, miracles and lifestyle of the early Apostles.

<sup>561</sup> Edith Blumhofer. *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism, Volume 1 – To 1941*. Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1989, 18.

<sup>562</sup> Wacker, “Playing for Keeps,” 197. Cited by Augustus Cerillo, “The Beginnings of American Pentecostalism: A Historiographical Overview,” 229-254. In the Volume Edited by Edith Blumhofer, Russell Spittler, and Grant Wacker. *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*. (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press), 241.

<sup>563</sup> Edith Blumhofer. *The Assemblies of God*, 18-20.

denominations.”<sup>564</sup> One example is the Christian and Missionary Alliance, led by A.B. Simpson, which discarded denominationalism and formed small groups that met on Sunday afternoons and weeknights. They attracted people from all denominations who were seeking a deeper walk with God. Simpson’s emphasis on healing made him a part of the Restorationist group that was so open to the Azusa vision. These non-denominational home group meetings seem to be a common characteristic of any revivalist movement and, in this case, carried a strong holiness theme. A similar motivation can be seen amongst these groups and those of Phoebe Palmer (earlier) and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (later).

Cerrillo correctly criticises Blumhofer’s Restorationism for not taking into consideration the numerous Restorationist groups that rejected Pentecostalism and the many Pentecostal groups influenced by other than Restorationist themes. He also critiques Wacker for not addressing the origins of the primitivistic impulse. Cerrillo’s analysis is valid, but it does negate the importance of the Restorationist theme in early Pentecostalism. Regardless of its starting point, early Pentecostals were drawn to examine the first centuries of the Church. In this sense, Restorationism may be regarded as a search for holiness as lived out by the first Christians and another connection to John Wesley.

## **F. HOLINESS AND THE WELSH REVIVAL AND KESWICK MOVEMENTS**

Both Bartleman,<sup>565</sup> much earlier, and Blumhofer, today, tie the Azusa Revival to the Welsh Revival. Though separated by an ocean, the movement in Wales prepared many around the world for Pentecostalism. Blumhofer includes the Keswick movement and lists three causes for the connection of these events: first, believers were challenged to personally obey the Holy Spirit, often evidenced by convening services that did not retain the traditional structure; second, the Welsh Revival was viewed “as an end-times Pentecost”;<sup>566</sup> finally, terminology that would later be used by Pentecostals was made familiar.

Many who would eventually follow after the Pentecostal message were challenged by the teaching of Welsh revivalists and Keswick leaders, sometimes one in the same. Even the emphasis on Joel 2 was common in the Welsh Revival, where Evan Roberts, the recognised leader, often referred to this passage as being fulfilled and only in the beginning stages of the latter rain. The effect of this movement was a de-emphasis on sanctification and an emphasis on the “power” of the Holy Spirit, making holiness

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<sup>564</sup> Edith Blumhofer. *The Assemblies of God*, 110.

<sup>565</sup> It is important to note that Bartleman does not credit Parham as the originator of the movement, but looks to the Welsh revival for inspiration. Although he makes a great effort to distance the movement from Parham, the connection cannot be erased.



available to all. It could perhaps be said that Thérèse did the same thing in her time. Her message of love could be viewed as an increase in holiness, but the wide availability of miracles in the “shower of roses” put an emphasis on power rather than sanctification. In this sense, is it possible that her revival is similar to Pentecostalism?

## **G. THE FATHER OF HOLINESS: PARHAM OR SEYMOUR**

James Goff (1988) builds a strong case that “Parham founded the Pentecostal movement in Topeka, Kansas, early in 1901...”<sup>567</sup> Goff’s research is carefully detailed and done in such a way that it makes clear his motive is not racist at its foundation. Goff genuinely views Parham as the theological innovator of Pentecostalism and in my opinion, is right that Seymour was following Parham’s lead. Yet, I would propose that Goff underestimates Parham’s rejection of Seymour and the Azusa Revival, which he renounced as demonic. Although it is fair to call him the theological innovator, Parham was not the leader of the movement even as early as six months after the revival began in Los Angeles. Goff is also correct about the millenarian-missions emphasis, which adds to evidentiary tongues another theological innovation for which Parham should be credited. Where Goff is incorrect is suggesting that Seymour’s view of integrated race-, gender- and class-transcending worship was a failure. If this failure proves he did not initiate the Pentecostal movement, one could argue in like fashion that Jesus Christ is not the founder of Christianity.<sup>568</sup>

In contrast, Leonard Lovett attempts to show Seymour, not Parham, as the father of Pentecostalism:

...the almost totally unplanned efforts of W. J. Seymour, the Black Apostle of Pentecost, were unprecedented. Without instruments of music, no choir, no collection or financial arrangement, no bills posted to advertise the meeting, without any organised church support, individuals from some thirty-five nations heard the message of Pentecost during this three-year revival and returned to initiate the movement in their own nations.<sup>569</sup>

Lovett rightly assesses Seymour as the catalyst for the Azusa Revival; however, he errs with other claims. First, he diminishes Parham’s theological contribution, the doctrine of evidentiary tongues. Second, Lovett ignores Seymour’s theological and practical reliance on Parham in the initial meetings. Third, the spread of the Azusa meetings, although amazing, was not without a public relations effort. *The Apostolic Faith* was printed by the tens of thousands and distributed throughout the world. Finally, Lovett attempts

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<sup>566</sup> Edith Blumhofer. *The Assemblies of God*, 100.

<sup>567</sup> James Goff. *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*. (Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 15.

<sup>568</sup> Hollenweger. *Pentecostalism*, 22.

<sup>569</sup> Leonard Lovett. “Perspectives,” 40-41.

to attribute the rapid expansion of the Azusa Revival to Seymour's personal efforts, a conclusion which is untenable in light of the movement's exponential growth. In addition, Seymour's influence diminished to nil in a matter of a few years following the revival. Other leaders, even from the black community, stepped forward to assume primary leadership roles.

Blumhofer rejects the black-only origination of the movement, stating that none of the churches that formed as a result of Azusa were as racially inclusive as the revival's initial meetings. This obvious fact does not remove the prophetic vision that Seymour had of an integrated church. Another factor contrary to bestowing all credit on Seymour is the testimony of black contemporary Charles Price Jones, co-founder of COGIC and an alleged mentor, attributing Parham as early as 1906 with the doctrine of evidentiary tongues: "The Tongues cult started in Kansas a few years ago under a man named Parham...Afterward, in 1906 I believe, it broke out afresh in a coloured mission in Los Angeles, California."<sup>570</sup> An intriguing account, as Jones was not a convert to Pentecostalism and thus had no reason to praise either Pentecost or its leaders. His witness recognising both Parham and Seymour is therefore more balanced.

As the conflict between whites and blacks grew at the midpoint of the century, many whites entirely suppressed Seymour's significance. In my opinion, it is impossible that Parham with his racist views could have been little more than a theological innovator. For it was in the hands of the humble Seymour that the revival grew. In retrospect, it may be that Seymour's racial openness was more responsible for the explosive growth of the movement at its inception than was the doctrine of "initial evidence."

Is it wrong to claim Seymour as the sole father of the Pentecostal movement? Perhaps not, but it may be limiting, as it ignores the theological contribution of Parham. Hollenwegger attempts to make Seymour alone the father of Pentecostalism, yet balance is required here to rightly acknowledge the contribution of both men. Synan calls Seymour and Parham the "co-founders of world Pentecostalism."<sup>571</sup> Attempting to choose one over the other is at best useless and at worst an indication of one's own prejudices.

It is here that one can see most clearly the significance of one's cultural or theological bias. For those who believe evidentiary tongues is the defining characteristic of Pentecostalism, Parham is the

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<sup>570</sup> Charles Price Jones. Cited by Wacker, "A Profile of American Pentecostalism," An essay presented to the Society for Pentecostal Studies. (1983, 11), 1-90, 43.

<sup>571</sup> Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 5.



father. For those who consider social equality the key element of the Pentecostal movement, they will look to Seymour. It is only in recent years that the Pentecostal/Charismatic Church has truly mobilised itself to pursue total racial equality in the body of Christ. In this regard, perhaps Seymour, although not the only one, was prophetic as to what the Pentecostal Church would become.<sup>572</sup> And like many prophets of scripture, he did not see his vision fulfilled.<sup>573</sup> Here, one can see cultural influence, or even theological bias, as being the deciding factor in who is chosen as the father of the movement.

## **H. GENDER AND RACIAL EQUALITY IN THE HEALING MOVEMENT**

Anthea Butler proposes that the issues of gender and racial equality were an outgrowth of the healing movement. Tracing the ministry of famous Pentecostal healers such as Charles Parham, William Seymour, Carrie Judd Montgomery, Maria Woodworth-Etter, Aimee Semple McPherson, Mother Emma Cotton, and John Alexander Dowie, to name but a few, she suggests that the healing movement led to equality: "If women could be sanctified, receive the blessing and administer healing just as the men, what should be their prohibition to minister? Faith is the only prerequisite required to obtain it, and therefore, the doors are open to all that have it."<sup>574</sup> Butler also credits men like Dowie and his vision of a utopian society as a strong force for gender and racial equality.

The heart of Butler's writing, while stated only briefly here, is to recognise that other powerful forces were at work for racial and gender equality during the time leading up to the Azusa Revival. It was not merely Seymour who prophetically proclaimed this message; many other voices were calling for a solution. Even in the culture at large, the women's suffrage movement (beginning in the nineteenth century and concluding in 1928), the long struggle against slavery, and the Civil War must be seen as the canvas on which was painted the burgeoning Pentecostal movement. In support of her arguments, it has already been demonstrated that the credentialing of women began prior to the Pentecostal movement. In terms of Thérèse, the issue of race was not addressed by her, but one wonders what it would take to move the Catholic Church to ordain women as priests. More will be said regarding this in Chapter 8.

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<sup>572</sup> John Alexander Dowie, in the Chicago area, also sought to have an integrated congregation.

<sup>573</sup> Anthea Butler. "Gender, Race, and Healing in the Holiness/Pentecostal Traditions: Intersections and Trajectories." *Society for Pentecostal Studies* 5 (1998) 1-17, 11-12.

<sup>574</sup> Anthea Butler. "Gender, Race, and Healing." 16.

## I. HOLINESS AS A SOCIAL REVOLUTION

A number of Pentecostals today desire to find in Azusa Street a “new archetype for social justice by attempting to recover its original interracial unity.”<sup>575</sup> This new emphasis is a paradigm shift for most Pentecostals, as it declares the Holy Spirit can both empower and unite the Church. This new model of holiness proposed in recent years views the revival not as an experiential explosion of Pentecostal holiness but as a cultural revolution of racial unity and a quest for social justice. This perspective is reflected more and more in Pentecostal scholarship. In 2004, Jeanne Porter presented these views in a paper to the Society for Pentecostal Studies, and in reference to Seymour stated: “His deep belief in inter-racial harmony characterised his spirituality as much as the more ecstatic expressions typically associated with Pentecostal spirituality.” She went on to describe the same vision in the life of Charles Mason, co-founder of the Church of God in Christ: “His egalitarian and social uplift values shaped COGIC’s popularity with the ‘working poor that filled its ranks for most of its first fifty years.’”<sup>576</sup>

An emphasis on social ministry is also evident in Henry Dyck’s analysis of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). When the organisation was formed, two of its eight stated purposes related to ministry to the poor:

1. To carry out charitable and philanthropic work.
2. To collect, solicit, and accept funds...for charitable or benevolent purposes.<sup>577</sup>

In addition, pacifism was strong: most of their ministers were conscientious objectors in the First World War.

These and other social causes occurred both before and after the Azusa outpouring. But the most important theological change in the past century was Seymour’s new and radical view of integration. James Goff states that it revolutionised racial, gender and class barriers, and pushed Seymour to the fore as founder of the movement. He rejects, however, that this was Seymour’s goal: “The theological primacy of the initial tongues doctrine was submerged beneath the romantic notion that somehow Pentecostalism

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<sup>575</sup> Benvenuti, 7.

<sup>576</sup> Jeanne Porter. “The Practice and Principles of Life in the Spirit: An Examination of Pentecostal Spirituality.” 8. *Society for Pentecostal Studies* 33 (2004) 1-27. The quotation within a quotation is from David Daniels. “Until the Power of the Lord Comes Down:” African American Pentecostal spirituality and tarrying. In Clive Erricker and Jane Erricker (eds.) *Contemporary Spiritualities: Social and Religious Contexts* (173-191). (London & NY: Continuum, 2001), 174.

<sup>577</sup> Thomas W. Miller. *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. (Mississauga: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994) 115. Cited by Henry Dyck. “L’Esprit [SIC] du Seigneur est sur Moi?: A Brief Analysis of the Social Ethics of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC)” 1. *Society for Pentecostal Studies*. 11 (1996) 543-564.



brought social equality.”<sup>578</sup> The problem for those who hope to forward the social agenda of Pentecostalism is that they must obscure or ignore the true history of the movement.

The implications of the cultural setting in Pentecostalism were examined by Robert Anderson (1979): “Rejected by the world, the Pentecostals in turn rejected the world. Lacking the skills and opportunities to improve their fortunes in this world, they renounced worldly success and developed their talents within the limits of the community of the Spirit.”<sup>579</sup> Although some of the early Pentecostals were wealthy, the cultural appraisal here is correct in that the majority of early Pentecostals were poor and socially unprivileged, like Seymour. The trouble with Anderson’s pessimistic cultural assessment is that it fails to account for the worldwide explosive growth of the Pentecostal movement. Cerillo critiques Anderson: “He has no answer for how these uneducated ‘losers’ could so quickly become middle-class, and finally, he ignores the liberation and empowerment that came from the Pentecostal experience. According to Anderson, ‘The root source of the Pentecostal movement was social discontent.’”<sup>580</sup> I would add that Anderson’s purely secular conclusion works only if one assumes that God is not involved in the affairs of men and that there is no such thing as “conversion” or “new birth.”

It is true that to make Seymour into a radical integrationist extricates him from the roots of the Holiness movement, roots which are undeniable. Certainly, Seymour desired to have integrated worship and a unified congregation, but the cultural perspective of those living in today’s twenty-first century is far removed from the thought processes of those who lived a hundred years ago. Seymour was deeply committed to a holy life and the Word. To suggest otherwise is to force twenty-first century ideals upon the thinking of a deeply humble and committed holiness preacher.

In a social agenda, one finds an emphasis on equality. The emphasis on impartiality and meeting felt needs are obvious reasons for the success of the Pentecostal movement. These factors should also be viewed as reasons for the success of the Thérèsian movement. Yet, in suggesting a radical social agenda, one can see an example of how holiness adapts to its cultural setting. Seymour could not have envisioned current social ideas, but today the restoration of the African identity is viewed by some as true Pentecost. Nevertheless, one could ask whether social, gender and racial equality are a part of true holiness.

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<sup>578</sup> James Goff, “Charles Parham’s Endtime Revival: The Eschatological Expectations of Tongue Speech in Early Pentecostalism,” 89. *Society for Pentecostal Studies* 5 (1998) 1-18.

<sup>579</sup> Robert Anderson. *Vision of the Disinherited: The making of American Pentecostalism*. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979), 240.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid.

# CHAPTER 7 – THE ROOTS OF MODERN HOLINESS

## INTRODUCTION

Theology is primarily concerned with what one believes about God, His Word and the means of salvation. Holiness is primarily concerned with how one lives. Through this study, it has been demonstrated how one overarching influence of piety affected both Thérèse of Lisieux and John Wesley, namely, the influence of Thomas à Kempis’ *The Imitation of Christ*. In this chapter, a connection will be demonstrated between Seymour, the Holiness tradition and Thomas à Kempis.

### A. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

The Importance of à Kempis in the life of Thérèse has already been demonstrated. She quotes him at least 48 times in her works, which would be sufficient evidence of her dependence, but the proof goes beyond even this. As a child, she claimed to have memorised his entire work: “Je savais par cœur presque tous les chapitres de ma chère *Imitation*.”<sup>581</sup> For show, her parents would name a passage and she would recite it from memory.<sup>582</sup> Assuming her self-description is true, for a young child to have memorised *The Imitation* illustrates enormous self-discipline. It also reveals the importance the family placed on the work. In addition, there would have been a significant psychological impact on her life from the inculcation of this famous book describing the holy life from the perspective of a monk. Memorisation of this work at such a young age would have so coloured her worldview as to make life without its influence unimaginable. *The Imitation* was truly her perspective of holiness.

A brief summary of her quotations from à Kempis will suffice to demonstrate his imprint upon Thérèse’s life:

<b>Subject in her writing:</b>	<b><i>The Imitation:</i></b>
Vanity	I, 1, 3
Riches are perishable	I, 1, 4
Humility, hatred of self	I, 2, 3
Perfection	I, 17, reflection
Love for Jesus	II, 7
Poor in Spirit	II, 11, 4
Suffering plus love of Jesus	II, 12, 11
Teaching without words	III, 2, titre
Jesus makes things sweet	III, 5, 3
Nothing is impossible	III, 5, 4
Love makes the difficult possible	III, 5, 4
No friendships	III, 24, 2
A Desire for life to be bitter	III, 26, 3

<sup>581</sup> Thérèse of Lisieux. *Œuvres Complètes*. (Paris: Les Editions Desclée De Brouwer et les Editions du Cerf, 2004), 146. Her sister, Geneviève, supports her statement here in the Ordinary Process.

<sup>582</sup> This is highlighted on page 74 of this work.



<b>Subject in her writing:</b>	<b><i>The Imitation:</i></b>
To have complete mastery over self	III, 38, 1
Avoid confrontation	III, 44, 1
Call to death	III, 45, reflection
Suffer in Peace	III, 45, reflection
A Flame for your heavenly spouse	III, 49, 2
Hate Self	III, 49, 7

The effect of *The Imitation* is so evident in her life that one cannot mistake its significance. It was surely the foundation of Thérèse's personal piety.

## B. HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS OF HOLINESS

The case for Seymour is not as simple. The connection between Thomas à Kempis and Wesley has already been shown. Wesley did not memorise *The Imitation* in his early childhood; although he was exposed to it at a critical juncture early in his life. What makes *The Imitation* stand out where Wesley is concerned is the fact that he translated it as a devotional book for use by his followers. Thus it would not be an unfair conclusion to suggest that he read and meditated on *The Imitation*, in its original language, until he was motivated to translate it for others.

The difficult issue here is to connect Seymour to Thomas à Kempis. In my opinion, it is unlikely that Seymour personally read à Kempis. Since his parents were Catholic, there is a possibility that he was exposed to this famous book, but his parents' and his own limited education would belie this. More likely, I see the influence of *The Imitation* as coming to Seymour via the Methodist and Holiness traditions. Can a connection be demonstrated between the Holiness preachers and John Wesley, and between John Wesley and William Seymour?

### 1. Holiness in Charles G. Finney (1792-1875)

As a theologian, Finney spent much of his time defining the theological issues of sanctification and interchangeably used the terms sanctification and consecration.<sup>583</sup> There was also a legal or forensic element to his piety which referred to the sanctifying work of the atonement. In Finney's doctrine, a person was sanctified by the work of Christ, but the passions of the body still had to be controlled. The soul must rule over the body. The key issue in holiness was expressed in the word temperance, which Finney defined as a "moderate use of things that are useful"<sup>584</sup> and the rejection of anything that would cause harm. In many respects, this kind of temperance reflects the holiness one would find in a monastery and in à Kempis.

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<sup>583</sup> Charles G. Finney. *Guide to the Saviour: or Conditions of Attaining to and Abiding in Entire Holiness of Heart and Life*. (Oberlin, Ohio: James M. Fitch, 1848), 15.

The opposite of temperance was a life of lustful passion. Finney also railed against certain vices such as tobacco, alcohol, coffee, and tea. He rejected worldly pleasure and stated that many of the evils that befell man were a result of a lack of self-discipline. Finney pointed out the great enemies of one's sanctification: "Full provision is made for overcoming the three great enemies of our souls: the world, the flesh, and the devil."<sup>585</sup>

He also developed a list of possible temptations, from which we can discover the type of behaviour or piety he expected:

Again, the soul is pressed with a sense of the infinite holiness of God, and the infinite distance there is between us...Again, the Christian's mouth is closed with a sense of guilt, so that he can not look up nor speak to God of pardon and acceptance...He lies along on his face, and despairing thoughts roll a tide of agony through his soul. He is speechless and can only groan out his self-accusations before the Lord...Again, it [the soul] is oppressed with a sense of its own utter emptiness, and is forced to exclaim, I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing...<sup>586</sup>

Finney, in his recitation of temptations, began with the greatness of one's sins, the power of one's enemies, the distance between oneself and God, and the guilt of one's sins. His comments of "despairing thoughts" and a "tide of agony" are reminiscent of the "dark night" of John of the Cross. For Finney, the solution was to recall the great accomplishments of Christ, the lesson of *Guide to the Saviour*.

Although Finney does not specify how one might live a pious life, it is clear that his desire for and preaching of sanctification indicated the goal was holiness and that this would be accomplished through controlling one's body and passions. His list of temptations mirrors many of the pious views of Thomas à Kempis.

## **2. Holiness in Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874)**

Phoebe Palmer was one of the great leaders of nineteenth-century Methodism. In her writings, one can see clear evidence of à Kempis' influence. Seeking for sanctification, in a practical sense not a judicial or forensic sense, was seeking after holiness—a holiness that was lived out. She also answered the question, "Is There Not A Shorter Way?," which was part of a conversation that she overheard, and is of interest in that she posed it almost 50 years before Thérèse of Lisieux was born. Palmer too was seeking a shortcut to holiness, one that was faster than the difficult tradition she inherited.

In terms of how one achieves holiness, Palmer's views are in line with à Kempis in many areas. She stated that "holy" people are to be "not of this world." (John 18:36) Connected with this was the idea

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<sup>584</sup> Charles G. Finney. *Principles of Sanctification*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1986), 149

<sup>585</sup> Charles G. Finney. *Principles of Sanctification*, 74.



that one is a “stranger” in this world, a “sojourner,” biblical concepts as well. Part of Palmer’s way of holiness was to “imitate Christ,” to follow His example. Later she said that she would give all of herself to this pursuit of holiness, that her time would be spent only in this pursuit.<sup>587</sup>

For Palmer, everything was written within the context of sanctification. Such was the tradition in which she lived. For her, the key to sanctification was this attitude of giving up all to God. The way to keep hold of one’s holiness or sanctification was “the way of the cross.” A scripture quoted by all in the Holiness tradition is: “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24 AV) Finally, the sacrifice to God is ongoing: “...keep ever in the spirit of sacrifice.”<sup>588</sup> Many of the issues of holiness are combined in Palmer’s offering of oneself to God for sanctification, which, of course, is reminiscent of Thérèse’s offering of oneself to merciful love.

### 3. Holiness in Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899)

Dwight L. Moody was a great revivalist who travelled both in America and Europe, preaching the gospel to millions of people. Moody died in 1899 and was therefore an early contemporary of both Thérèse and Seymour. Moody’s preaching concentrated on the issue of conversion, but, like Palmer and Finney before him, there was also an expectation of a holy life. One can read his observations on holiness in *Sowing and Reaping*. Again and again, Moody repeats the warning that one’s actions will produce results both in this life and in the life to come for those who are not “saved.”

Moody approached the monastic ideals of à Kempis in his statements regarding the need for reflection and self-examination: “How watchful men should be of their thoughts, their practices, their feelings!...Men do not stop to examine themselves, to lay their hearts and minds bare as in the sight of God and judge themselves by His most holy will.”<sup>589</sup>

He also considered the problem of “the flesh”: “Every desire, every action that has not God for its end and object is seed sown for the Flesh.” Near the end of the nineteenth century, Pentecostal terminology inundated the entire revival movement. “Sowing to the Spirit” was considered a living a life of holiness for it “implies self-denial, resistance of evil, obedience to the Spirit, walking in the Spirit,

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<sup>586</sup> Charles G. Finney. *Guide to the Saviour*, 186-189.

<sup>587</sup> Phoebe Palmer. *The Way of Holiness, with Notes by the Way; being A Narrative of Religious Experience resulting from a Determination to be a Bible Christian*. (New York: Lane & Scott, 1850), 58, 93.

<sup>588</sup> Phoebe Palmer. *Entire Devotion to God*. (Salem, Ohio: Schmul Publishers, 1979), 77, 78.

<sup>589</sup> Dwight L. Moody. *Sowing and Reaping*. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1896), 33.

living in the Spirit, guidance by Spirit... We sow to the Spirit when we crucify the flesh and all its lusts, when we yield ourselves to Him as we once yielded ourselves to the flesh.”<sup>590</sup>

Moody made a powerful statement about piety in linking holy living to the will.<sup>591</sup> He also understood the importance of virtue and the outcome of lives that possess none. His perseverance was evident as he recalled the challenge of Paul: “Let us not be weary in well-doing; in due season we shall reap if we faint not.” (Gal. 6:9)

In speaking of repentance, Moody stated: “...repentance is not fasting and afflicting the body. A man may fast for weeks and months and years, and yet not repent of one sin.”<sup>592</sup> It appears from this statement that Moody was far from the monastic ideal, but that was not his point. The result of repentance, which for Moody was the door to salvation, was fruit: one who had truly turned from sin would manifest a life of Christian fruit, which included the “fruit of the Spirit,” as mentioned in Galatians 5:22: “...love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control....” (AV)

#### **4. Comparison to Thomas à Kempis**

Although it is unlikely that any of these three well-known Holiness leaders read a devotional from the Roman Catholic tradition, it is nonetheless possible and à Kempis’ influence is obvious. In the following I will highlight some of the dominant themes and demonstrate a connection to the writings of à Kempis where applicable:

##### **a. Imitate Christ**

It has already been shown that imitating Christ was a theme of Palmer. Since it is the title of à Kempis’s book, a quote by him is hardly necessary, but he noted these thoughts: “These are Christ’s own words by which He exhorts us to imitate His life and His ways...” (3)<sup>593</sup>; and “You certainly should feel ashamed if, after meditating on the life of Christ and after having been so many years following in His footsteps, you still have not conformed your life to His.” (41)

##### **b. Complete Commitment to Follow God**

For Palmer, the commitment was to holiness as defined in her day and religious context. The same can be said of à Kempis, but to a different end, a monastic life. Still, their language is similar. à Kempis states: “Spiritual progress and perfection consist in offering yourself, with your whole heart, to

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<sup>590</sup> Dwight L. Moody. *Sowing and Reaping*, 43, 46.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>592</sup> D. L. Moody. *The Way to God and How to Find It*. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1912), 75.



the divine will...." (115) One finds in Finney the same idea in his comments about deliverance from sin and repentance.

**c. We are not of this world, pilgrims, sojourners...**

The idea of being sojourners comes primarily from Palmer, but is repeated over and over by à Kempis as well: "The more a man desires to be spiritual, the more distaste he has for the present life." (32); and "Live as becomes a pilgrim and a stranger on earth." (1 Peter 2:11)<sup>594</sup> (36)

**d. The World, the Flesh, and the Devil**

Finney called believers to overcome in the three categories mentioned above. For Moody, it was stated in terms of the flesh and self-denial. Palmer called it an entire sacrifice of self. It is obvious from all three that the problem was self, that is, the flesh. The overcoming of the flesh was a constant theme for à Kempis. The entire concept is, of course, biblical and comes from 1 John 2:16. à Kempis stated: "There are some things that draw men to love the world and there are others that lead them to despise it. *The lust of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.*" (105) The dilemma was clear. "I struggle against myself and am a burden to myself, and while my spirit desires to soar above, my flesh pulls me downward." (150)

Facing self is one problem; facing the world is another. Finney asserted that one must be over the world, the flesh and the devil; à Kempis required the same in relationship: "It is impossible for you to enjoy a double paradise: one here, based on the delights of this world, and the other reigning with Christ in His kingdom." (38-39); and "...it teaches them to despise terrestrial things and to long for celestial realities..." (79) Finney described this type of holiness as rejecting worldly pleasures; the same idea as in Thomas: "...You will fail miserably if you value and esteem anything that is worldly... whoever seeks temporal glory does not despise the world as he should..." (53-54)

Finney spoke of overcoming the devil, while Moody spoke of Satan's power to deceive. à Kempis said: "Know that the ancient enemy, the devil, makes every effort to put an end to your deep desire to do good and tries to allure you from your religious devotion..." (83) "*The old enemy, the devil* [1 Peter 5:8] who opposes everything good, never stops his tempting...." (136)

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<sup>593</sup> Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*. 1998. Quotations in this section from the classic work will only be referenced by a page number in the 1998 edition.

<sup>594</sup> Scripture references given are the result of the footnotes in the 1998 version. Often they are partial quotations or only vague references. Some are mentioned here for convenience of reference. à Kempis quoted scripture so often that an analysis of his use of scripture falls outside of the scope of this paper.

#### **e. The Way of the Cross**

The way of the cross is an idea developed by Phoebe Palmer. In à Kempis, this same thought included elements of suffering. Currently, suffering is not a well-developed theme amongst Pentecostals, but this was not the case during Seymour's time. Finney carried some of the same ideas with the phrase "death of self" and being "crucified to the world." à Kempis said: "Jesus today has many lovers of His heavenly kingdom, but few of them carry His cross...Don't those who continually seek their personal comfort and gain love themselves more than they love Christ?" (63-64); and "Christ's entire life was a cross and a martyrdom, and you look for rest and pleasure?" (67)

As already stated, being crucified to the world was an idea put forth by Finney. One can also see this in à Kempis' strong rejection of the world: "What has the world to offer you without Jesus?" (57); "Grant me to die to all worldly things...." (98); and "...Think of yourself as someone dead on earth, and as one *to whom the whole world is crucified.*" (Gal. 6:14) (141)

#### **f. Temperance, or Moderation**

Finney described piety in terms of temperance, or moderation. à Kempis prayed: "Lord, I ask You to lead me by Your hand and teach me never to yield to excess." (117) According to Finney, one must be able to control all of his body's desires and passions. à Kempis expressed it as follows: "You are to be lord and master of your actions and not their slave nor hired servant." (134) Finney stated that one must control the will, the same ideas as à Kempis: "There is hardly anything in which we have such need to die to self as in seeing and suffering things that go contrary to our will...." (153) Moody considered the issue of temperance along the lines of the fruit of a Christian life; à Kempis' writings concur: "...from a pure heart there flows the fruit of a good life." (125)

#### **g. Death and Judgement**

Moody spoke about death, judgement and the penalty for sin. Death and the coming judgement were common themes in à Kempis as well: "Prepare yourself for Judgement Day..." (36); "There, a man will be punished according to the types of sins he has committed...Therefore, take care and be sorry for your sins, so that on Judgement Day you may be safe and numbered among the blessed." (37) One must repent, according to Moody and à Kempis would concur: "Repentance opens the way to much good while dissipation quickly destroys it." (29)



#### **h. The Distance Between Man and God**

Finney wrote of the temptation to focus on the greatness of one's sins. à Kempis would agree with this tendency, but would emphasise the greatness of one's sinfulness: "Recall your sins with deep sorrow and hatred, and never think of yourself as being in any way important because of any good you may have done." (78) Man is weak and sinful and should only trust in God's evaluation: "If you rightly recognise what you really are you will not care what men say about you. After all, men only see your face, but it is God who sees your heart." (55)

#### **i. The Fruit of the Spirit**

The fruit of the Spirit is spoken of in Galatians 5:22-23 and was mentioned by Moody as what I would call a product of holy living. à Kempis often mentioned love, joy and peace: "The kingdom of God is living peacefully and joyfully in the Holy Spirit [Rom. 14:17] and this is not granted to the wicked." (47) Love was most often related to God and Christ: "If you love God with your whole heart, you will fear neither death nor punishment, neither judgement nor hell." (39) In Book III, Chapter 5 of *The Imitation* one can find à Kempis' extensive statements concerning the value of love.

### **C. WILLIAM J. SEYMOUR'S RULES**

Seymour, in *Doctrines and Discipline*, provided advice concerning a pastor's conduct. Theology was handled in other parts of this work, so these words for a pastor can be seen as advice for living a holy and pious life. The following rules were copied directly from the original text (a photocopy). Only rules 10 and 11 are abbreviated. It is obvious that statements in à Kempis concerning the "religious" would be irrelevant for someone of the Evangelical persuasion; such could be ignored or taken metaphorically for those in pastoral or leadership roles. In the same manner, comments about marriage would have held no meaning for Thomas à Kempis.

**Rule 1. Be diligent. Never me [SIC] unemployed. Never be triflingly [SIC] employed. Never trifle away time. Neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.<sup>595</sup>**

In à Kempis, one finds similar ideas: "Give up all light and frivolous matters...If you abstain from unnecessary conversation and useless visiting, as well as from listening to idle news and gossip, you will find sufficient and suitable times for your meditations." (I, 20, 1; 26-27)<sup>596</sup>

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<sup>595</sup> Seymour, William J. *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission*. Los Angeles: Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission, 1915), 40-41. All of the following rules were taken from the same two pages of the text.

<sup>596</sup> Thomas à Kempis. *The Imitation of Christ*. Translated by Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J. New York: Vintage Spiritual Classics, 1998. The following quotations from Thomas à Kempis will show the book, chapter and section numbers, as well as the page numbers in this translation.

**Rule 2. Be Serious. Let your motto be “Holiness to the Lord.” Avoid all lightness, jesting and foolish talking.**

This rule holds two thoughts. The first is to seek holiness in an attitude of seriousness. Holiness usually included a rejection of the world: “Whoever is weak in spirit, given to the flesh, and inclined to sensual things can, but only with great difficulty, drag himself away from his earthly desires.” (I, 6, 1; 9) Second, let one’s speech be serious, avoiding that which is frivolous: “The discussion of worldly affairs, even though engaged in with good intentions is nevertheless a hindrance, for we quickly become tainted and charmed by trivia. I have often wished that I had remained silent and had not been in the company of men.” (I, 10, 1; 12-13)

**Rule 3. Converse sparingly, and conduct yourself prudently with women. 1 Tim. 5:2**

This rule should also be divided, for there are two distinct ideas. First, speak as little as possible: “If you abstain from unnecessary conversation and useless visiting, as well as from listening to idle news and gossip, you will find sufficient and suitable times for your meditations.” (I, 20, 1; 27) Second, one should have a wise comportment, especially in relation to women. The subject of women would not have been an issue for à Kempis or others in a monastery. However, what is relevant here is controlling one’s desires: “...despise all worldly things and renounce all vile pleasures...The more you withdraw yourself from creaturely consolation, the greater and sweeter will be the comfort you find in Me.” (III, 12, 5; 93-94)

**Rule 4. Believe evil of no one without good evidence; unless you see it done take heed [SIC] how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner’s side.**

The issue here is judging. Concerning this, à Kempis stated: “Keep your eyes on yourself and avoid judging the actions of others. In judging others we accomplish nothing, are often in error, and readily fall into sin; but we always gain by self-examination and self-criticism.” (I, 14, 1; 18) This rule may be referring to someone in prison or on trial, but the key element is to always think the best of people. This was the attitude he conveyed. The same can be said of other’s opinions: “What can another’s words or another’s wrongdoings do to you? The one who speaks such words inflicts more harm on himself than on you...” (III, 36, 3; 132)

**Rule 5. Speak evil of no one, because your word especially, would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast till you come to the person concerned.**

The phrase “eat as doth a canker” is from 2 Timothy 2:17 (KJV) and the context concerns avoiding foolish and even heretical speech. The beginning thought is the central theme: “speak evil of no one”; and



“Be patient in bearing the imperfections and weaknesses of others, no matter what they be, just as others have to put up with your faults...” (I, 16, 2; 20)

**Rule 6. Tell every one under your care what you think wrong in his conduct and temper, and that lovingly and plainly, as soon as may be; else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.**

This runs counter to à Kempis in that he encouraged great patience in the face of another’s weaknesses. However, Seymour here was speaking of those in authority and one who is required to correct those “under your care.” The idea in à Kempis is evident in his image of the monastery: “In the monastery, men are tried as gold is tried in the furnace, and no one can remain here unless he is willing, with his whole heart, to humble himself for the love of God.” (I, 17, 3; 22) The focus for à Kempis was on directing the monk; therefore, obedience and humility were key. We may, therefore, view this in contrast to Seymour, who here was giving direction to leaders. à Kempis was always speaking to the submitted follower; although he briefly addressed priests, he did not give instructions to those who must correct others.

**Rule 7. Avoid all affectation. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.**

One was to avoid any attempt to impress others with one’s own importance. In speaking of the early desert fathers, à Kempis said: “They were strangers to this world but close and intimate friends of God...They possessed true humility, lived in simple obedience, and walked in charity and patience.” (I, 18, 4; 23)

**Rule 8. Be ashamed of nothing but sin.**

In *The Apostolic Faith*, October-January 1908, Seymour wrote: “He hates sin today as much as He ever did.” Then, one can read in à Kempis: “Repentance opens the way to much good...” (I, 21, 1; 29) Repentance was important to both Seymour and à Kempis.

**Rule 9. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath but for conscience’ sake.**

Punctuality is the issue first mentioned, but the main issue is keeping the rules: “Our spiritual advancement will equal our resolutions, so if we want to make good spiritual progress we need to exercise diligence in making our resolves.” (I, 19, 2; 24)

**Rule 10. You have nothing to do but to save souls; Therefore spend [SIC] and be spent in this work; and go always not only to those that want you, but those that want you most...**

As a monk, à Kempis did not consider the possibility of saving souls; however, there is a connection between Seymour and Thérèse on this particular issue. Even as a cloistered nun, Thérèse believed that she could save souls through prayer. The focus on evangelism is a contemporary effort that would not have

been included in the thinking of a monk such as à Kempis. It can, however, be seen in other Roman Catholic leaders even prior to à Kempis.

**Rule 11. Act in all things not according to your own will, but as a Son in the Gospel. As such, it is your duty to employ your time in the manner in which we direct; in preaching and visiting from house to house; in reading, meditation and prayer...**

The primary issue here was obedience. This goes well with à Kempis' thinking: "You have entered the monastery to obey and not to govern..." (I, 17, 3; 22)

## **D. SEYMOUR'S OTHER WRITINGS**

### **1. Humility**

One of the primary elements in Seymour's life was humility. The model of the humble Christian was also central in à Kempis' teachings: "Do not esteem yourself as someone better than others... Take no pride in your good accomplishments... believe still better things of other and you will, then, preserve humility." (I, 7, 3; 10-11)

### **2. The Scriptures**

Another vital component for Seymour was the importance of the scriptures. à Kempis state: "We should search the Scriptures for what is to our profit... If you wish to derive profit from your reading of Scripture, do it with humility, simplicity, and faith" (I, 5; 8-9); and "The devout man makes progress in the silent and quiet reading of the Scriptures wherein he learns many hidden things." (I, 20, 6; 28)

### **3. Guidance/Experiential Religion**

Seymour notes in the November 1906 edition of *The Apostolic Faith* that the Holy Spirit will guide us: "The Spirit will tell you what to do... The Lord will lead you by His small voice." Thomas writes: "Let all teachers be mute and all creation keep silence before You. Speak to me, You, and You alone" (I, 3, 2; 6); and "Blessed is the soul that listens when the Lord speaks to it..." (III, 1, 1; 73) One of Thérèse's favourite passages reflects this idea as well. (III, 2, title)<sup>597</sup>

### **4. Sexual Purity**

In *The Apostolic Faith*, October-January 1908, Seymour declared: "God wants a holy church and all wrong cleansed away—fornication and adultery, two wives, two husbands..." Seymour wrote extensively on the subject of a holy marriage. Again, for à Kempis and Thérèse the subject of marriage was irrelevant, much as monasticism is for most Protestants. Yet, the definition of monasticism includes

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<sup>597</sup> St. Thérèse of Lisieux. *Œuvres Complètes*. Footnote 413, 1273.



the idea of chastity. In à Kempis, one finds supporting ideas on the subject of purity of heart: “Be inwardly pure and free...” (II, 8, 5; 57)

## **5. Honesty**

The quotation above (4) continues: “...not paying grocery bills, water bills, furniture bills, coal bills, gas bills, and all honest bills. God want His people to be true and holy and He will work.”

Interestingly, the theme of honesty is not mentioned in à Kempis, but it could be implied by the Rule of monastic life, in my thinking.

## **E. AFTER SEYMOUR**

### **1. Anti-learning**

Very likely during Seymour’s day, but especially in the early years of the Pentecostal movement, there was, in general, an anti-intellectual attitude. That attitude has greatly diminished in the past few decades, but for years higher education was frowned upon by many Pentecostals. This agrees with the words of à Kempis, who often spoke against learning: “Curb all undue desire for knowledge, for in it you will find many distractions and much delusion. Those who are learned strive to give the appearance of being wise and desire to be recognised as such...” (I, 2, 2; 4)

### **2. Death of Self/Worldly Desires**

A common Pentecostal theme is the death of self. It is a biblical (Galations 2:20) and Holiness theme as well. à Kempis wrote: “If we were altogether dead to ourselves, and our hearts were free of all entanglements, then we might be able to savour the things of God and contemplate heavenly realities.” (I, 12, 3; 14)

### **3. Poverty**

Seymour did not take a strong stand on poverty. This was possibly because it was all he had ever known and ran counter to the combined emancipation ideals of liberty and prosperity. However, other writers of the day were most willing to take a stand on this matter. Frank Bartleman, for example, lived by “faith” and this often left him penniless.<sup>598</sup> The context of poverty in a monastery is quite different than for an early Pentecostal; however, there is a common thread. Poverty was obviously a foundational idea for à Kempis, from whom much supporting evidence is available: “There is no one richer, nor one more powerful, nor one who enjoys greater freedom than the man who can renounce himself and his

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<sup>598</sup> Frank Bartleman. *Azusa Street*. (S. Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, Inc. 1980), 10-11.

possessions and choose the lowest of places” (II, 11, 5; 64); and “The contempt for riches will weigh more than all the treasure in this world...” (I, 24, 6; 38)

## **CONCLUSION**

This current historical comparison does not prove that Palmer, Finney or Moody relied upon Thomas à Kempis. There are obvious differences. Yet, the similarity of the four authors demonstrates a continuity of ideas from à Kempis through the nineteenth-century Holiness movement. The common elements illustrate that many of the themes of piety communicated by à Kempis were carried, either intentionally (by Wesley) or unintentionally (by the Holiness preachers) through the centuries to Seymour. Therefore, one may conclude that Thomas à Kempis, although a Roman Catholic monk whose doctrine was substantially different, laid the foundation for the Holiness movement and for Pentecostal piety thereafter. In addition, Thomas à Kempis’ ideas of piety were foundational in the life and writings of Thérèse of Lisieux and were replicated by her with a high degree of similarity. Therefore, it is my conclusion that *The Imitation* was the foundation of holiness or piety in both the Thérésian and Pentecostal movements.



# **CHAPTER 8 – A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF ROMAN CATHOLIC AND PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS IN THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX AND WILLIAM J. SEYMOUR**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Some from both sides will be offended by a comparison of Thérèse of Lisieux and William J. Seymour. Catholics may be appalled that one of their favourite saints would be compared to an uneducated “holy roller.” Pentecostals may likewise be offended that a founder of their movement is compared to a cloistered nun completely disconnected from the greatest revival of the twentieth century. The goal here is obviously not to offend, but to find common ground. Again, both sides may argue there is no common ground, but that response, in my opinion, would prove hasty.

Perhaps a more intriguing question would be, had Thérèse of Lisieux known William Seymour, or, more likely, had she corresponded with him, would she have approved of some of his ideas? Being a “good Catholic nun,” such contact would have been impossible, but the question is valid. Despite his scathing remarks concerning the Catholic Church, is it possible that William Seymour would have applauded Thérèse for at least some of her views? A thoughtful response to these questions is what guides this thesis.

If one is to contrast these two central figures accurately, one must first recognise the vast chasm that separated them culturally and linguistically. In seeking commonalities, one must also examine the various words and symbols connected to the ideas of holiness for each within their respective tradition.

## **I. ELEMENTS OF COMPARISON AND CONTRAST**

### **A. TERMINOLOGY**

In the Roman Catholic tradition, to be holy is nearly equivalent to being a saint. In defining holiness, even the great Catholic theologians do not agree, as is illustrated in the introduction to this thesis. The first challenge most people face in attempting to be holy is seeing beyond the limitations of one’s own culture. Were Seymour and Thérèse able to surpass this inherent limitation?

For Thérèse, holiness meant becoming a saint, a Roman Catholic saint, and from her earliest youth she was driven by this vision. This stemmed from her relationship with her mother, as did the idea that only by entering the convent could she realise this desire. Thérèse followed her mother’s prescribed

path to sainthood in the Catholic Church, setting the record, up to that date, for the shortest beatification. Yet, although she took the normal path of her day to holiness, she is credited with having invented a new path. The irony here is often missed: that in the most rigid of religious settings she is credited with having birthed a way to holiness available to all.

Holiness was equally important to Seymour as an early Pentecostal, but it was also an important part of the tradition that formed him. There is no question that Seymour's pursuit of holiness finds its roots in the tradition of Methodism. His early training was in the Methodist Church and his *Doctrines and Discipline* not only points back to Methodism but deep into the history of the Methodist movement, to the *Thirty-nine Articles* and also to the Anglican Church. Through his dependence on the traditions of Methodism, one can see how they significantly impacted his life. Again, the irony is striking: that a man of conservative Methodist roots is credited with having birthed the Pentecostal movement.

## **B. HOLINESS DEFINED**

What was holiness for Thérèse? Is there commonality at this point between our two figures? Thérèse's decision to become a nun followed the cultural expectations of holiness for a Catholic family in late nineteenth-century France. In this sense, she was firmly ensconced in her culture, not looking beyond. She followed Roman Catholic tradition, professing vows for her chosen life of celibacy and cloistered existence. She demonstrated her holiness or piety by her painstaking attention to the dreary requirements of this tradition—faultless in keeping The Rule and even adding her own requirements. Yet, she was seeking a shortcut to sainthood in her quest for holiness. The “elevator” would become this quicker method which was to replace the many steps of her tradition. Late in her brief life, her shortcut was defined as the “little way” or the “way of love.”

For Seymour, holiness had to be obtained before one could be baptised in the Holy Spirit. His earliest thoughts indicate, along with the classical definitions of the early Pentecostals, that the sign of being filled was the “scriptural evidence,” that one had spoken in tongues. In Seymour's early thought, speaking in tongues became not only proof of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but also of holiness. Later in life, he rejected evidentiary tongues and sought for signs of Christian character, the fruit of the Spirit, that one was filled with the Spirit and holy or sanctified.

In order to compare Seymour and Thérèse, one must take the highest form of their thoughts, as some of their ideas have not withstood the test of time. Catholic leaders desire to make Thérèse a revolutionary, but to view her as such one must ignore certain of her statements, as with Seymour. For



example, Seymour's statements regarding divorce would be considered harsh by today's standards; the same with prohibitions against smoking and drinking. What was the revolutionary core of Seymour's teaching and how would Thérèse have responded to such teaching? The teaching of Seymour, in its unfiltered form, would not have been welcome at Carmel. This, however, is not the point. I believe that there is much in the teaching of Seymour with which Thérèse would have agreed. In terms of relevance, there is indeed common ground between these two contemporaries, even though their cultural milieus were immensely different.

### **C. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES**

The culture of Thérèse's day in late nineteenth-century France was one of privilege and social change. At the time of her premature death, after more than a century of struggle, France was only eight years away from declaring the complete separation of Church and State. Her parents were loyal not only to the Catholic Church, but to the monarchy as well. Theirs was a home of privilege and wealth. In the struggle between Socialism and the Republic versus the Church and monarchy, the Martin family found itself firmly set against the rights and needs of the poor.

William Seymour found himself in a similarly intense struggle. Freedom for the slaves in America, declared at the beginning of the Civil War, did not, in reality, provide equality for African-Americans. The Jim Crow laws of the late nineteenth century declared whites to be superior to blacks and suppressed all who were not of European descent. Unspeakable tortures and cruelties were committed against the black community—and not only them. The Chinese and other racial groups were also treated as lesser human beings. Los Angeles, not having the Jim Crow laws, was one of few places in the country where the Pentecostal experiment could have occurred.

Both Thérèse and Seymour lived on the edge of their society. In France, there was a fear among Republicans that the Church would regain its power. Thérèse, in siding with the Church, chose to ignore the plight of the poor. Seymour, as the son of slaves, was part of the marginalised.

Both Seymour and Thérèse were products of their culture. Examples of cultural influence can be seen in Thérèse's blindness to the needs of the poor. She did not include in her teachings anything that would have sought to correct the injustices of her day in the area of poverty. She accepted the theological assumption of her day that poverty was part of God's plan and that some people were designed by Him to be poor. Another cultural imprint was that Thérèse was raised in a wealthy Catholic family. Both of her

parents idolised the religious life. Her sisters were trained by a Jansenistic aunt, so her view of holiness as a child was related to counting acts of holiness.

Although Seymour saw the social injustice of his day, he became entangled in the issue by mixing social injustice with bad theology. Rather than rejecting the character of those who hurt him, as they were all whites, he chose to disallow white persons from serving in leadership in his church. Seymour was blind to the possibility that it was a rampant flaw of racism that needed correction rather than the theology. Although he may have been correct in his conclusions, the rejection of all whites from leadership makes this dubious. Seymour was imprinted by his social class, namely, that both his parents had been slaves. He rose above his culture in visualising an integrated church.

Another example of cultural influence is the perspective of Americans on the origins of Pentecostalism. A black Pentecostal will most likely see the influence of slavery as paramount in the formation of Pentecostalism; whereas a white Pentecostal can easily imagine Pentecostalism as forming without the influence of slavery in American history. Another illustration of cultural influence is that the majority of Pentecostals in America still worship in segregated settings, whites, blacks and other ethnicities as well. This is the result of the racial struggle that was present even before the beginning of Pentecostalism.

#### **D. INITIAL REACTION TO THE MESSENGERS**

How were these two legends viewed by their peers? On the whole, comments from the early years of the revival only sing the praises of Seymour. Remarks by William Durham and Frank Bartleman have already been noted. Others include A.S. Worrell, who said that Seymour had “more power from God than all his critics in and out of the city”<sup>599</sup> and Rachel Sizelove, a well-known figure in the early days of the AoG, who remarked: “He...stayed behind the box on his knees before the Lord, hidden away from the eyes of the world...”<sup>600</sup> Early observations show Seymour as a person of prayer, humility and commitment to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Although the Assemblies of God notes his leadership at the revival in Los Angeles, within a decade of Azusa Street, Seymour was marginalised by the Pentecostal mainstream and relegated to being the pastor of a struggling black church in Los Angeles. The Apostolic Faith movement, of which he was the founder, did not see the kind of explosive growth of other Pentecostal groups. Not intending to sound

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<sup>599</sup> A. S. Worrell. Cited by Fred Corum and Hazel Bakewell. *The Sparkling Fountain*. (Windsor, Ohio: Corum & Associates, Inc. 1989), 38.

<sup>600</sup> Rachel Sizelove. Ibid, 39.



harsh, it seems that the AoG would rather highlight the work of their founding fathers than this humble, one-eyed, black man who essentially died in obscurity.

The only significant sources of negative comments were the secular press and mainline churches resistant to his message. Frank Bartleman, involved with the movement from the very beginning, criticised Seymour in his 1925 version of the revival. Being deeply against any religious organisation, he condemned him for organising his church in the fashion of other denominations. Even more, the early Pentecostal tradition refused in any way to lionise its heroes. Theological debates and racial struggles separated the early Pentecostal denominations from their most notable founder. Also, by reverting to his roots, Seymour rejected the organisations that could have lifted him to prominence.

At the recent Centennial Celebration (April 2006) in Los Angeles, 600 million were said to trace their Spirit-filled lives back to Azusa Street. Everyone at the Centennial was speaking Seymour's praises. New books about Seymour and the revival were on sale, and he was at last given the honoured place he so deserves.

In Chapter 3, we considered the remarkable impact of Thérèse of Lisieux during the years immediately following her death. From that time to her beatification, over 30 million pictures and over 17 million relics<sup>601</sup> were sent out. By 1915, more than 700,000 copies of her abbreviated life's story had been sold. By 1918, her home convent was receiving 1,800 letters a day in request of her prayers and intercession. To date, hers was the shortest time from death to canonisation: 27 years. This can be contrasted with Joan of Arc, who was not canonised until almost 500 years following her death.

It is hard to imagine how Thérèse could have been so influential. There is no question that the work of her sisters was instrumental in spreading her fame, but was that the only reason? Why was her message so widely received? The Catholic Church was apparently ripe for change and the message Thérèse brought was both timely and relevant. Without a doubt, Thérèse's message of love, childlike faith, abandonment to God, and re-emphasis on scripture—available to everyone, not just the cloistered—did much to revive the Catholic Church.

While Thérèse was early on recognised as a holy person, Seymour was not. Currently, it appears that Thérèse's popularity has decreased, at least in the public eye, although her book is still in demand and her status as a Doctor of the Church has reinvigorated her message. Meanwhile, in recent years,

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<sup>601</sup> It seems impossible that there could have been 17-million relics, but it must be remembered that Thérèse's sisters were planning her sainthood even before she died. Therefore, everything she touched

Seymour's popularity and acceptance as a pivotal father of the Pentecostal movement have been on the increase.

## **E. HOSTILE SOCIETY**

Both Thérèse of Lisieux and William J. Seymour faced a hostile society. Thérèse was part of the successful working class, but the French society as a whole was hostile to the Church. What was her attitude toward this hostility? In her cloistered setting, was she even aware of it?

Like many children, Thérèse followed the political and religious allegiance of her family. Although her childhood was very sheltered, she was able to discern some of the events in the world at large. Her prayers of intercession for Pranzini<sup>602</sup> illustrate a degree of awareness of current events. Although forbidden, she furtively read the local newspapers and eavesdropped on family conversations. Still, it is unlikely that she understood the struggle of the masses of French society in the depths of war, privation and oppression. Her perspective was shaped by an other-worldly perspective dominant in the lives of her parents and home.

Once she joined the convent, her understanding of worldly events further diminished. With no newspapers to read and few conversations to overhear, she would have become almost entirely isolated from world events.<sup>603</sup> That was part of the purpose of Carmel—to shut out the world and devote oneself to prayer. This she did with all of her might, global events fading to distant memories.

Seymour also faced a hostile culture in his day. The local press was negative towards his movement. The other churches were equally unreceptive. *The Los Angeles Times* was particularly critical of the Pentecostal movement. Bartleman depicted the hostility in a positive light,<sup>604</sup> but A.C. Valdez seems to have had more painful memories of this rejection.

Other denominations were bitter in their attacks against this new movement of the Spirit. Seymour and his people were criticised for their emotionalism—shouting, screaming and falling were not part of the established church of the day. They were also criticised for theological errors. Other denominations viewed their constituents as already filled with the Holy Spirit. In fact, some of those closest to Seymour, the Methodist tradition, rejected Pentecostalism because it called into question their assertion of Holy Spirit baptism.

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was saved and, when possible, cut up into the smallest possible fragments. Even with this knowledge, such a large figure seems questionable.

<sup>602</sup> This was the criminal that Thérèse prayed for as a child, that he would become converted even at his execution.

<sup>603</sup> There is evidence that she was familiar, to a small degree, with the current events of her time.



Moreover, Seymour suffered merely because he was a black man. While attending Parham's school in Houston, Texas, he was only allowed to listen from the hallway. Walter Hollenweger notes that because he was black he suffered greatly: "During Seymour's adult lifetime three and a half thousand black persons were known to have been lynched, averaging two a week. Innumerable brutalities took place around him, many of them instigated by Christians."<sup>605</sup> The racial hatred was strong in many areas and few were prepared to view Seymour without being influenced by race.

The hostility touching Seymour created in him a bitterness towards white Pentecostals, and understandably so. It was after all the white leaders who caused him the most harm. It was this opposition that brought about the greatest change in Seymour's teaching and policies. No longer was he willing to allow white men to serve with him on his board of elders; no longer could white men be deacons. Whites were of course welcome to attend his church; however, they could not hold leadership positions. Looking back, it is obvious that his denunciation of a fully integrated church leadership was not the right solution.

## **F. THEOLOGICAL ISSUES**

Theologians agree that the role of saints has generally decreased in recent years. Elizabeth Johnson conveys the thoughts of Lawrence Cunningham, asserting, "...the formal canonisation process...has become so irrelevant and obstructionist that it should be abandoned or, at the least, radically modified. Far from promoting piety it induces in some quarters a strong alienation as a result of the process losing touch with the people..."<sup>606</sup> David Brown explains some of the reasons for this, stating that "their lives have been recounted, with too much stress on pious devotions and an over scrupulous goodness that is more likely to alienate the modern reader than speak of relevance to their own lives."<sup>607</sup> Johnson struggles to develop a scriptural basis for honouring the saints and admits there are no individual saints in the New Testament, and no venerating of saints in scripture; in the end, she concludes that the issues of community and mutual dependence are the most significant motivations for the veneration of the saints in Catholic tradition.

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<sup>604</sup> Frank Bartleman. *Azusa Street*. (1980), 54.

<sup>605</sup> Walter Hollenweger, "The Black Roots of Pentecostalism," 40. Chapter found in Allan Anderson & Walter Hollenweger, Editors. *Pentecostals After a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, "Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 15." (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

<sup>606</sup> Elizabeth Johnson. *Friends of God and Prophets: a Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints*. (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1999) 104.

<sup>607</sup> David Brown. *Through the Eyes of the Saints: A Pilgrimage Through History*. (London: Continuum, 2005), 3.

The complexity of the whole matter of sanctity is the invocation of saints. Luther declared that there was no scriptural support for this practice. The Council of Trent gave no theological analysis of the dilemma, but simply reaffirmed the previous practice, stating that it was “good and useful” in an effort to diminish some of the more exaggerated abuses concerning the veneration of the saints. It was not until the Second Vatican Council that real reform was possible. Consider the critical admission by Johnson, a Catholic theologian: “There is no text in the Bible that could be even remotely construed as mandating the practice of invoking the saints.”<sup>608</sup> In fact, many Catholic theologians would agree that invoking saints is not necessary for salvation. Yet, the practice continues in Catholic worship as a whole and is not likely to be halted. It is a strange situation: the Church continues to invoke the saints; yet, on a personal basis, it is deemed unnecessary.

Although scripture does not mention the departed saints as praying for us, it does make it clear that Christ prays for His followers. According to scripture, Christ’s intercession is sure. The Holy Spirit is mentioned as interceding for us in Romans 8:26-27, and Christ is our Intercessor in Romans 8:34, but never does one find the saints praying for us. Since Christ is seen as interceding for His Church, and no scriptures indicate that the departed do so as well, the invocation of saints appears to be without scriptural basis.

What then is to be the attitude of Protestants as regards the departed? Answers will vary, but for an American Protestant, whether he considers it or not, his relationship to the faithful who have died in Christ is an important consideration. Most Protestants follow the path of Calvin: a total rejection of sanctity, as a reaction to the overemphasis of the Catholic Church, that continues to this day. Despite Johnson’s remarks, the majority of Catholics still invoke the saints in large numbers and in some parts of the world depend more on them than on Christ. While there has been a renewed emphasis on scripture in the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II, it appears that many Catholics are still more influenced by the traditions of the Church, especially in societies where literacy is marginal. This may also be true for Catholics who give more credence to the stories of the saints than to the Bible. Although Evangelicals emphasise the importance of scripture, there are some Protestant traditions where the reading of the Bible is also viewed as less important and, in this situation, is not due to a lack of literacy. In recent years, Roman Catholic theologians and North American and European priests are placing more emphasis on scripture.

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<sup>608</sup> Elizabeth Johnson, 124.



Perhaps the rejection of sanctity by most Protestants is not unfounded, but is it an overreaction? As previously mentioned, scripture declares that those who have died in the faith are a great “cloud of witnesses.” (Hebrews 12:1) This reference in Hebrews 12 addresses the long list of heroes of the faith noted in Hebrews 11: Noah, Abraham, Moses, and many others, some of whom are not even named. It would seem that those mentioned are credible examples for us. Even more, Protestants have no difficulty in lifting up the Apostles’ exemplary lives and other recent heroes of the faith such as Wesley, Moody or Seymour. Many faithful Christians have been lionised by pastors desiring to inspire their flocks to faithfulness.

The irony as regards any reference to a “cloud of witnesses” is that the following verses in Hebrews eliminate them as attention-worthy—Christ alone is exalted as the One who “perfects” our faith: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross...consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV) No thought is given to the many names presently listed in Hebrews 11. Jesus is our only pattern, we should “fix our eyes” on Him. This would make the “cloud of witnesses” simply that: witnesses.

Does this mean that other examples should be ignored? No, but it explains why Protestants are so resistant to the tradition of sanctity. For most American Protestants, only Jesus is truly worthy of imitation. Regardless, it appears that many great men and women of the past are worthy of honour and their lives can serve as examples. Should we ask them to pray for us? Evangelicals will agree that this idea is not supported by scripture. Are we united with those who have died in the faith? Yes, they, like we, are dependent upon Christ and His grace for eternal life. Yes, their faithful model of living provides encouragement to us in our own struggle to be overcomers.

It appears that there may be agreement between Catholics and Protestants on the issue of sanctity in one area: example. The lives of holy people serve as such. One can learn from those who have gone before and imitate their pattern of living. This is the case in Paul’s appeal to his own example: “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.” (Philippians 3:17 AV) Paul could not replace Christ, but he was an “easier” example to follow.

At the time of the Reformation, Cranmer was so focused on removing the abuses of the past that he would only allow biblical saints significant celebration in the Church of England. Since that time, the list of saints in the Church of England has changed considerably, with the addition of some recent church

leaders to the Church calendar. Reformation leaders and other great English Church leaders have been added to the holy days, offering the closest parallel in the Protestant world to the making of saints. Those listed might even surprise some Protestants. In fact, I wonder if some on the list would be surprised to find themselves there! Following are some of those included in the *Alternative Service Book* of the Church of England (1980), noted as lesser festivals and commemorations:

May 24, John and Charles Wesley, Priests, Poets, Teachers of the Faith, 1791, 1788  
July 29, William Wilberforce, Social Reformer, 1833  
Aug 31, John Bunyan, Author, 1688  
Oct 6, William Tyndale, Translator of the Bible, 1536  
Dec 31, John Wycliffe, Theologian, Reformer, 1384<sup>609</sup>

In addition to these individuals, the following are noteworthy names in the book of *Common Worship*, 2000 edition, to name but a few:

Jan 13, George Fox, Founder of the Society of Friends (the Quakers), 1691  
May 26, John Calvin, Reformer, 1564<sup>610</sup>

American Evangelicals would find some of these heroes worthy of imitation. They would also focus attention on great missionaries such as William Carey, or sacrificial leaders such as George Muller, or notable evangelists such as D.L. Moody.

However, the idea of having a list of saints would be offensive to most American Protestants. Even the term “saint” when used to draw attention to an individual is rejected by American Evangelicals as non-biblical. Saint applies to all believers, living and dead. I would suggest that the rejection of the calendar of saints is for most Evangelicals more a rejection of the form and liturgy of the High Church than it is a rejection of those noted as worthy examples.

The truth is that even saints are imperfect people. Understanding the cultural and theological forces resistant to sanctity, the curious still may ask: Who would be a saint if Pentecostals were to choose some of their favourites to be honoured? Although most Pentecostals would spurn the suggestion that humans should be honoured in any such manner, it is sure that most of them hold certain of their Church leaders in high regard. Also, many books written on Christian leaders of the past are read and imitated by Pentecostals around the globe: Watchman Nee, George Muller, John Wesley, and Paul Bunyan, for example. Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, a recognised classic and popular among Protestants of all denominations, was written to accomplish just this task, namely, to highlight the lives of those who had lived exemplary lives up through the sixteenth century. Although most Protestants would not call these

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<sup>609</sup> *The Alternative Service Book*, (Cambridge University Press, 1980), 19-21.



men and women “saints” in the Roman Catholic sense of the word, the imitative quality of their lives is irrefutable. Recognising that Pentecostal Churches have no official method by which to honour these past heroes, there is still no question that they are highly esteemed.

What of William Seymour? Is it possible that Pentecostals and even Catholics would find in William Seymour a person worthy of saintly honour? (Outside of the Catholic Church, this is obviously only an exercise in imagination.) Since he did not die a martyr’s death, the current procedure would be limited to the issues of “heroic virtue.” Recent beatifications seem to have made other issues more significant along the path to sainthood. The canonisation of Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei, is possibly one whose imperfect life—but a founder of a great movement—might open the door to William Seymour, co-founder of another great movement. As with Thérèse, critics from both sides might be offended by the comparison of Seymour and Escriva. Some would take great issue with Escriva’s seemingly heavy-handed style of leadership and control, as well as other issues. However, that is not the question at hand. Escriva was flawed as an individual, as are all, but he nevertheless influenced many towards good. Even though Seymour was imperfect, his vision of an integrated church empowered by the Holy Spirit still challenges the Church a hundred years later. In reality, William Seymour would have no possibility of sanctity within the Catholic Church. Perhaps the Anglican Church would be willing to add him to their calendar, since the movement of Pentecost had a positive impact on the entire world, including the British Isles.

On the other hand, is it possible for Protestants to view Thérèse of Lisieux as a life worthy of imitating? Protestants would reject her religious life as unnecessary and possibly counter-productive. Theologically, the treasury of merits would be seen as a great error by American Protestants. Still, could one find value in her “Way of Love”? Could her shortcut of the “little way” be seen by American Protestants as valid?

All Protestants would agree with an emphasis on love in the Christian life. The real difficulty with Thérèse’s views for American Evangelicals would be the context. Surely, the same could be said of the Catholic opinion concerning the Azusa Revival; the context would make any related teaching offensive. However, if one can overlook the context, one can find in the life of Thérèse attitudes worthy of following: humility, love, childlike simplicity, sexual purity, and devotion—all speak of a life that

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<sup>610</sup> *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England*. (London, Church House Publishing, 2000), 5, 9.

Protestants would desire. While the particulars of each area may not be settled on, the emphasis, in general, is commendable.

In reality, it seems unlikely that we would find a list of Pentecostal “saints” any time soon, and even less likely that Thérèse of Lisieux would be on such a list if it existed. The same could be said of the canonisation of William J. Seymour by the Catholic Church. Yet, in studying these two figures, we have moved one step closer to uniting the Christian Church at large, all believers, as fellow children of Christ. In the next section, we will examine what these two revivalists held in common.

## **G. HOLINESS IN COMMON**

In this study, the stated goal was to discover the elements of holiness which bridge the theological and cultural gap between Thérèse of Lisieux and William J. Seymour. Part of the common ground between them, according to my conclusions and already illustrated, is the influence of Thomas à Kempis. Now, we will examine the elements of holiness our key figures have in common. The following should be considered a partial list, and should not be considered as being in order of importance.

### **1. The Goal of Holiness**

For Seymour, the drive for holiness was expressed as a second work of grace, sanctification, and was as all-consuming as that of Thérèse. As a child, her ideas concerning holiness were strong but simplistic. As time passed, her desire to be holy matured. Thérèse’s commitment to love could also be seen as a statement of her emphasis on holiness itself, for love is more concerned with the object of love and less concerned with self. In this respect, holiness may have been less important to Thérèse in her later years. Sainthood was never less significant, but her focus on the means of attaining it possibly changed.

### **2. Holiness in This Life**

A second point of agreement can be found between the Methodist tradition for sanctification and the Roman Catholic doctrine of sanctity, in that both traditions agree that complete holiness is attainable in this life. This issue could be debated theologically, but for Seymour and Thérèse there does not seem to be any doubt: they both claimed to have achieved holiness. Although both might hedge on the issue of complete perfection in this life, they both considered themselves to have arrived, at least to some degree.

For Seymour, the claim was one that came early in life, for Thérèse it was later. The differences are many, but the end result is the same. For Seymour, the proof was that he went on to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. According to him, one had to first be sanctified in order to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, whereas for Thérèse, the proof was in her statements made later in life. She requested that her



sisters save her nail clippings, eyelashes and other personal items as relics. The fact that she requested these items be saved indicates not only that she knew she would be a saint in heaven—and therefore holy—but also that she was aware of this prior to her death.

Seymour claimed not only to be holy, but was obviously aware of it as well. Many Pentecostals would reject his stand on this matter, viewing complete sanctification as unattainable until death. Most Catholics would concur, stating that there are few “saints” who attain perfection in this life, but most cannot do so.

### **3. Humility**

Another commonality comes from the work of Thomas à Kempis, essential in the formation of Thérèse’s personality and early concepts of holiness. One finds in a modern translation of *The Imitation*: “Aime à être méconnu et compté pour rien,”<sup>611</sup> one of Thérèse’s favourite sayings. Humility was a very important part of her work of holiness. Even later in life at Carmel when she was given food that was almost inedible, she would say nothing. Many other examples of her humility could be cited.

Humility was also a key ingredient in the life of William Seymour. Most authors who have written about the early years of his ministry speak of a humble person, his head bowed in prayer. The problem most Christians would face is an acceptable definition of humility. Thérèse and Seymour would probably define humility differently, but often it masquerades as poor self-esteem.

### **4. Experiential**

Von Balthasar defines Thérèse as an existentialist, which is unquestionably true. Her theology was formed more by her experience than by scripture, sometimes ignoring even Catholic tradition. Like many of the great mystics of the past, she listened to an “inner voice” for direction. In fact, her test of true doctrine was whether or not it could be lived out, so, in her piety, doctrine was not a reality that existed apart from mankind, but was only true if it could be practiced.

Seymour would have also claimed to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. The proof of one’s sanctification was through an “inward witness.” The emphasis in Pentecostal Churches is that God speaks to the Church through those gifted to receive His messages. The list of gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 all lead one in the direction of the prophetic. In fact, the prophecy in Acts 2:17-21 that comes from Joel 2:28-32 is leading the New Testament Church into a

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<sup>611</sup> Thomas à Kempis. *L’imitation de Jésus-Christ*. (1983), 24.

relationship with God that is anointed and directed by the Holy Spirit. Without a doubt, both Seymour and Thérèse professed to hear directly from the Holy Spirit.

For Thérèse, one of the most important parts of her experiential theology was her intimate style of contemplation. This inner communion and communication with God would find common expression among Pentecostals, as they seek to hear from God in prophetic messages. While the language and traditions are deeply dissimilar, the end result, hearing from God, is the same.

## **5. Balance**

In Seymour, one finds a balance that was not present in some of his contemporaries. Although he took a hard line on the issue of divorce, he was following the cultural view of his day. He was more balanced where issues of money were concerned. Additionally, he was even-handed on the issue of speaking in tongues and encouraged people to seek after the baptism in the Holy Spirit, not tongues. Thérèse brought an element of balance to the cloistered life. While she followed the rigid rules, she eventually replaced them with a path that was less harsh and demanding. Admitting that she fell asleep during prayer is an example of not only her humanity, but her desire to soften the restrictive demands of the religious life.

## **6. Sexual Purity**

One area of strong parallel between these two greats is in the area of the sexual, which was of utmost importance. How they lived out their individual sexual purity was completely different, but it was, for both, a prominent issue. For Thérèse, her vow of chastity was a necessary component of being a nun, as without it she could not pursue her dream of holiness and mystical union with Christ. For Seymour, sexual immorality was a great enemy of the Church and of holiness; he railed against divorce on many occasions. Although the current attitudes in society towards chastity and divorce have greatly altered from a century ago, the perspective that the lack of sexual purity was sin was very similar.

## **7. Widely Available**

Another view they shared was that their method of holiness was available to all. Thérèse wanted to find a shortcut to God so that all people could follow after her. Seymour declared that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was available to all. Have “all” been able to follow the path of Thérèse towards holiness? There is no question that her “little way” was an enormous success. It has already been stated that by the time of her canonisation over 30 million pictures had been sent out, as well as over 17 million relics. Just these two elements alone would speak of 47 million people impacted by her message, and we have not



even considered the number of books sold, still available today. Her impact continues on a popular level, but now is reaching into the deep theological quarters of the Catholic Church. As a Doctor of the Church she still teaches the Church through her writings.

With regard to Seymour, estimates differ as regards the number of individuals who claim to have been baptised in the Holy Spirit. The message of Pentecost has impacted every branch of the Church, the only renewal movement that can make this claim.<sup>612</sup> The current estimate is that there are around 600 million Christians who have been impacted by the message of Azusa Street.

#### **8. Is Holiness Visible to the Holy?**

Can a holy man or woman see his or her own holiness? Is it a contradiction to view oneself as holy? Both Seymour and Thérèse claimed to be holy and thus were conscious of their holiness. Contemporary theology may suggest that to claim holiness would deny humility, which would in turn negate holiness. Even more, intimacy implies equality. Would not the sin of pride be the immediate result? The response of scripture comes from the Apostle Paul, who said: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1 AV) Paul regarded himself as an example to follow and as living a life like Christ, worthy of emulation. In his example, it appears that the intimacy of his relationship to Christ not only brought the desired holiness but also counteracted the effects of pride. In becoming truly like Christ, one becomes more humble. This seems to be the case with Paul and opens the door to other holy leaders who claim to follow Christ. One can be holy, having intimacy with Christ, and not be prideful.

Seymour sought to be sanctified because it was part of the teachings of the Methodist Church. For each of them, claiming holiness was part of their theological upbringing. For most Evangelicals and probably most Catholics today, true holiness is not considered attainable in this life. I view this as a cultural error: accepting sin, selfishness and hedonism as normative. I am not suggesting that perfection is available in this life, but rather that we have become too tolerant of sin.

#### **9. Desire to Save Souls**

Seymour is quoted as saying that there is only one thing one must do, and that is to "save souls." This point is emphasised in his *Rules for a Preacher's Conduct*: Do everything in your power to win people to Christ, to "bring as many sinners as you can to repentance." The evangelistic timbre of Thérèse emanated from her childhood and was evidenced in the Pranzini event. One can see a similar thrust in the works of Teresa of Avila in the following comment found three times in her work: "I would give a

thousand lives to save a single soul.”<sup>613</sup> The same motivation is seen in Thérèse’s declaration of her goal in coming to Carmel: “Je suis venue pour sauver les âmes et surtout afin de prier pour les prêtres.”<sup>614</sup>

## 10. Love

For both Thérèse and Seymour, the issue of love was central. John Nelson in a devotional-type book highlights some of Thérèse’s many statements on love, stating that one can have a “bold confidence in God’s mercy and loving kindness,” as well as a “tranquil trust in the actions of God’s limitless love.”<sup>615</sup> Many of Thérèse’s remarks about love would resonate with Seymour. Substantiation is hardly necessary for those statements connected directly to scripture, such as “love of neighbour” or love of the poor. Certain Thérésian ideas, however, would be problematic. She encouraged her followers to offer the merits of others to Jesus—an idea that would have been totally foreign to Seymour and to American Protestants in general.

Seymour also spoke of love, but he did so in terms of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To be baptised in the Holy Spirit was to be baptised in love; this is a statement in Seymour’s *Doctrines and Discipline*. Since it was not during the early revival, it could be concluded that Seymour’s emphasis on love was a later arrival, as with Thérèse. This is not to say that he would not have emphasised love in his early teaching, but as he shied away from the white leaders who had caused him so much trouble, he began to emphasise character more than the sign of tongues.

## 11. Prayer

Prayer was another key element for both Thérèse and William Seymour. Seymour spent days in prayer. Images of him during the early days of the revival describe him as kneeling behind the rustic pulpit, head bowed in prayer. Thérèse is famous for her unorthodox contemplation even as a child. Prayer as communion and fellowship with God may be the pinnacle of holy expression, which causes me to wonder how similar these two were in their style of prayer during their moments of intimate communion with God.

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<sup>612</sup> I would add that the Protestant message of salvation by grace through faith has also impacted all branches of the Church.

<sup>613</sup> Cited by *Œuvres Complètes*, 1236. My translation from the French. This comes from Chapter 1 of the “Way of Perfection.” “I felt that I would have laid down a thousand lives to save a single one of all the souls that were being lost there.” Teresa of Avila, *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, Translated by E. Allison Peers. London: (Sheed and Ward, 1978), Vol. 2, 3. In French, “Je donnerais mille Vies pour sauver une seule Ame !”

<sup>614</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux, *Histoire d’une Ame*, 1998, 129-130. Emphasis is by the author.

<sup>615</sup> John Nelson, Editor. *The Little Way of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*. (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1997), 35 and 63.



## **12. Changing Doctrine**

In Chapter 4 of this work, one sees examples of how the doctrine of the Catholic Church has changed over the years. The most obvious example is the rejection of limbo, along with the diminishment of purgatory. A similar truth can be found in Seymour and in Pentecostals in general. Seymour himself rejected the doctrine of initial evidence in a few years. While the Pentecostal Church has held to this doctrine, it continues to lose popularity. Much like purgatory, the Church holds to its traditional teaching while the average parishioner is asking questions about the veracity of the doctrine.

## **13. Women in Ministry**

Thérèse of Lisieux and her namesake did much to advance the cause of women in ministry. Although Thérèse could not, in reality, accept the role of a priest, she deeply desired many roles that were available only to men. In Pentecostalism, beginning with Seymour and even Parham before him, women were given equal status with men in the area of preaching. This change began in the Holiness movement through the use of the testimony at the time of Phoebe Palmer, but exploded after the start of the Pentecostal movement. All hindrances to the credentialing of women were swept aside based on the prophetic gift being poured out on both men and women.

Thérèse dreamed of more significant roles for women in ministry, and could be used by current Catholic theologians as the rationale for expanded ministry roles for women. Although the Catholic Church has repeatedly rejected the possibility of women priests, the Anglican Church has accepted this change. In both Seymour and Thérèse, although the motivation was different, the end result was that women received greater opportunities to minister. In practice, this could be seen as a contrast, but in theory, they both moved in the direction of greater ministry for women. While Seymour experienced it, Thérèse only dreamed of it.

## **14. Lay Ministry**

It is easy to see in Seymour a strong emphasis on lay ministry. This began in the Holiness movement, but gained greater and greater strength through Pentecostalism. Because everyone could receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and all could speak in tongues and use other gifts of the Spirit, the division between pastor and laity was greatly reduced. Thérèse personally did not see the change in her life in the same manner as Seymour, but she did proclaim a holiness that would be available to all. By so doing, she removed the hindrances of class and Church structure keeping most people from the life of holiness, thus opening the door of ministry to many who would have otherwise been excluded. It was not

until Vatican II that the Lay Apostolate was given new life. In this sense, Seymour experienced what Thérèse prophesied for the Catholic Church.

### **15. Rejection of Liberalism**

It may be difficult to make final conclusions about the thinking of Thérèse concerning liberal thought. Her struggle of 18 months at the end of her life shows that she was concerned with the problems of humanism and liberal philosophies encroaching upon the Church. Did she come to the place of accepting liberal thought even as a believer? It seems unlikely. For Seymour, liberalism was completely rejected. He stood strongly on the authority of scripture and rejected any liberalising influence. His only possible area of liberal thought would have been in his call for integrated worship at the beginning of his ministry. Yet, this could be seen as based in scripture rather than liberal philosophies which so many attempt to credit him with today.

### **16. Divorce and the Family**

Both Seymour and Thérèse would have agreed on many issues related to the family. The easiest to cite would be the issue of divorce. For Seymour, this was an absolute standard dictated by the statements of scripture. Although Thérèse did not address the issue, it seems safe to assume by her lack of comment that she was in full agreement with the teachings of the Church, a position based in scripture. Divorce was not permissible in the Catholic Church at that time and is still discouraged today. The Pentecostal Church has greatly reduced its rigor on this subject, but still holds a strong stance in this area for credentialed ministers.<sup>616</sup> Questions of abortion, contraception and euthanasia are important today, but not relevant for our primary subjects.

### **17. Poverty**

Although it was lived out in very different ways, both Seymour and Thérèse followed a life of poverty. Seymour may have worked against this as part of rejecting his inheritance of slavery, but the typical stand on material goods for Pentecostals of his day was a life of faith. The extreme of this can be seen in the life of Frank Bartleman. Seymour was less extreme than others of his epoch, but still supported the idea that for some the call to complete poverty was a possibility. It is fascinating that both the early Pentecostal tradition and Carmelite tradition stood for poverty as a way of holiness. How that poverty was lived out was very different and could be viewed in degrees, but it was still a life of dependence on God

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<sup>616</sup> At the August 2007 General Council of the AoG, a motion was passed that permits ministers to retain their credentials upon divorce and remarriage if abandoned by their spouse or if their spouse committed adultery.



for provision. A point of contrast would be in the means of poverty and its function. For Thérèse, poverty was a choice while for Seymour it was not. In function, poverty was a means to holiness for Thérèse while for Seymour it was to show one's faith. With regard to poverty, both Seymour and Thérèse chose a life of dependence on God.

### **18. Healing and the Supernatural**

The early Pentecostal position on healing was based on a theology of the atonement. Several early groups went so far as to reject the use of medicine. Even in recent years, Pentecostals can be found who are so convinced of their healing that they refuse medicine, some eventually dying as a result. These extremes would be rejected by Catholics, but the belief in God's ability to heal and in the supernatural has been a part of Catholic history for the past 2,000 years and a strong point of agreement between Seymour and Thérèse.

Although Thérèse rejected extreme mysticism, she nevertheless prayed for healings and experienced some of the supernatural. She did not seek after these, for she found that great miraculous events would have made her "little way" unattainable to the masses. For Seymour, the belief in the miraculous was part of the Holiness movement and became even stronger in Pentecostalism. One of the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 is miracles. After Thérèse's death, there was an outpouring of the miraculous as seen in the "shower of roses." Although the theological foundation of the miracles was very different, the Healer, Jesus, was the same, and both traditions saw a great increase in the miraculous as a result of their respective revival movements.

The question one must ask concerning miracles pertains to theology, assuming that there were many miracles that took place for those who prayed to Thérèse. The assumption is that the miracle proves that the intercession was effective, that the saint in heaven heard the prayer and interceded on one's behalf. Humanly speaking, it is a logical conclusion, but in the twenty-first century, one is compelled to dig deeper. Assuming for a moment that Evangelical theology is correct, namely, that the saints do not hear the prayers of the faithful and do not play any role of intercession, how could one explain these healings? Let us assume as well that a person is a believer and has prayed a prayer of faith, although the faith is possibly misdirected. Could the grace of God overlook the theological error and reach out to the need of the person? Stated more broadly, does any supernatural event validate one's theology? My response would be that the miraculous is never proof of one's doctrine but rather of God's grace and compassion.

## **19. Prophetic Message**

Today Thérèse, as a Doctor of the Church, is lauded as prophetically bringing change to the Catholic Church through her innovative ideas. This includes a re-emphasis on scripture, a rejection of harsh asceticism and intimate prayer, among others. Catholic theologians credit her for ideas she did not espouse, but the same could be said of some Pentecostal theologians as concerns Seymour. His message was also prophetic, one of integrated worship without regard to social class or race. One facet of a prophet is to the ability to see things through God's eyes, for neither Seymour nor Thérèse witnessed the fulfilment of their message in their lifetime. Both would have had to wait almost 60 years to see their vision come to fruition, Thérèse waiting for Vatican II and Seymour for the Civil Rights Movement.

## **20. Community**

It has already been noted that in the black churches the issue of community was more important than was the individual, likely stemming from years of suffering under slavery. The emphasis on community has also been noted in the Catholic Church. Although the motivation and the theology were quite different, the end result was the same, with concern focused on the group as a whole, not just an individual.

## **21. Meeting of Felt Needs**

As previously mentioned, one reason for the initial success of the Pentecostal movement was that it met the felt needs of people. Those who were sick could be healed and those who were marginalised could find new purpose. The same could be said of those who followed after the Thérèse's "little way." While the worldwide explosive growth of both movements did not limit it to only the poor, it does explain the expansion to some degree. Those living on the edges of society were touched by the love of God and had some of their deepest needs satisfied.

## **22. Power vs. Character**

Seymour began with the doctrine of "initial evidence" and later changed to emphasise character or the fruit of the Spirit as a sign of Spirit fullness. Thus for Seymour, late in life, character or holiness was more important than power. In this regard, it is my conclusion that Seymour and Thérèse would agree. Thérèse was not interested in power during this life; her sole ambition was changing her character to be like Christ. Though the picture of Christ would have been vastly different for Thérèse and Seymour, their emphasis on character was similar. As a father of the Pentecostal movement, Seymour was more



interested in the power of the Spirit than was Thérèse, but his ongoing emphasis on sanctification and rejection of the spectacular for consistent Christ-likeness make this another area of common expression.

## **H. HOLINESS IN CONTRAST**

How were Seymour's and Thérèse's views dissimilar? Perhaps their differences are too numerous to mention, but some issues can be painted with broad strokes. It is important to recall that we are examining the highest form of their teaching in the area of holiness, not doctrine.

### **1. Sexual Purity**

Although an area of commonality in terms of importance, there was quite a divergence in how sexual purity was carried out. For Seymour, sexual purity was defined in the bounds of marriage: only one marriage, only one spouse; divorce and remarriage were not allowed. For Thérèse, the only way to guard purity was through the complete rejection of marriage; devotion to God and marriage were mutually exclusive. Seymour saw faithful marriage as a fulfilment of sexual purity. This is probably one of the greatest points of contrast not merely between Thérèse and Seymour, but also between Catholics and Protestants. The majority of Catholics view celibacy as a sign of purity and spirituality, whereas for Protestants celibacy is a gift but not the only avenue of sexual purity. Even more, for Protestants, children are a blessing from God and the fruit of a holy marriage.

Thérèse viewed sexual purity in a more absolute sense. As has been mentioned, she almost feared her own body, unwilling to even take a shower. Her vow of chastity was unequivocal, so sexual purity was only attainable through complete rejection of anything sensual.

### **2. Experience above Scripture**

For Seymour, the prophetic voice of God was always subject to scripture; the true test of any message of the Holy Spirit was its agreement with the written record of the Word. For Thérèse, the true test of doctrine was if it could be lived out; this placed experience at a level above scripture and tradition. In fact, her experiences were more important than any demands of the Church or the Bible. If she heard a voice or message from God, she would then test the message with her own life: if she could live the prescribed path, then that was enough. In theory, she would have been obedient to the Church, but her teaching questions some Church traditions.

Concerning offering herself as a sacrifice of merciful love, Guy Gaucher writes: "Elle est prise d'un si violent amour pour le bon Dieu qu'elle se croit tout entière plongée dans le feu. 'Je brûlais d'amour et je sentais qu'une minute, une seconde de plus, je n'aurais pu supporter cette ardeur sans

mourir.' Pour elle, c'est la confirmation de l'acceptation de son offrande."<sup>617</sup> Here she experienced a warm feeling and believed that this was proof of her doctrine. All she needed was her experience. This would have never passed muster with Seymour. For him, everything had to be tested according to scripture—at least in theory.

### **3. Suffering**

Thérèse believed that by suffering she could save souls.<sup>618</sup> Her discipline is to be commended, but this idea would not have rung true with Seymour. For him, following after the Reformers, salvation was only by grace through faith; good works follow the converted soul but could not create salvation.

For the majority of American Evangelicals, the statements in scripture on suffering are problematic: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church..." (Col. 1:24 AV) I have never heard a sermon on this text in all my years of attending church in Pentecostal America. There is no theology of suffering in most American Evangelical traditions, and to some Americans suffering would be the result of a lack of faith and is always avoidable. For many years, Americans in general have not experienced suffering and have wrongly concluded that it is not part of a blessed Christian life. Even worse, the value of suffering is neither recognised nor welcomed. Obviously, the extremes found during the Middle Ages would not be wise, but addressing this issue is critical.

Some of the contrast here can be explained by the fact that Roman Catholics view salvation as a community event, while Evangelicals see salvation individually. This explains Thérèse's little sacrifices. She was filling up the treasury of merit for others, based on the above scripture.

### **4. The Ultimate Goal**

The final goal for Thérèse was to be in heaven interceding for her faithful followers and friends—bending God's ear so He would in turn shower them with favour and blessing. Seymour wished to arrive in heaven as well, but not so that he could intercede for others; instead it would be a time of communion with God and sweet fellowship with others enjoying the bliss of heaven. The problems of this world would be left behind and Seymour's work would be done. Only in this life would he struggle against pain and injustice.

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<sup>617</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux. Cited by Guy Gaucher. *Histoire d'Une Vie: Thérèse Martin*, 158.

<sup>618</sup> Thérèse de Lisieux. Cited by M.-D. Poinsenet. *Thérèse de Lisieux.*, 240.



## **5. Cultural Blindness**

Seymour was aware of the needs of his culture as one who had experienced the pain of its rejection. As a black man, he was one of the disenfranchised. Thérèse was not able to participate in the poverty of her day. Even though she chose a vow of poverty, it was artificial. She always knew where she would eat her next meal and was not concerned about the plight of the poor. This is one of the greatest contrasts between these two figures. Although one could argue that Thérèse experienced poverty through her vows, the truth is that by living in the convent she isolated herself from the needs of the common man.

## **6. Inter-denominational**

A significant difference between Seymour and Thérèse was their attitude towards outsiders. Again, we must look at Seymour in his highest form, before the problems of racism caused him to retreat. He was open to all persons worshipping with him at the revival services. In fact, he believed that the revival would unite all churches and denominations. In a way, he was correct. In contrast to this, we have no indication that Thérèse considered any group outside of the Roman Catholic Church. In this regard, she was not prophetic, nor did she see the possible changes that Vatican II would bring in relationship to the Catholic Church and its “separated brethren.” Any attempt to make her teachings or writings ecumenical would be forced, in my opinion.

## **7. Anti-Establishment**

Another part of Seymour’s vision of a united church was a rejection of the established churches. Although he changed his views later on, he was against formal denominations at the beginning and organisation on any level. On the positive side, this can be seen as an attempt to join all churches and denominations. Thérèse followed the organised church and even believed that by her submission to her superiors, her maturity was guaranteed. Even if the authoritative figure told her to do something that was “wrong,” her obedience was more important than being right. She was in full submission to established authority.

## **8. Holy Spirit Emphasis**

Another issue of contrast was the role of the Holy Spirit. Although Thérèse heard directly from God, she did not give nearly the prominence to the role of the Holy Spirit as did the early Pentecostals. The theological reasons for this are obvious and need not be repeated. For the Pentecostal, Seymour was an early example; the empowerment of the Holy Spirit was the key factor in living a victorious Christian life. This concept was far from Thérèse, whose primary emphasis was love. Through love one could

become holy, in her mind. Although Thérèse did have a doctrine of the Holy Spirit, she did not seek after the Holy Spirit or the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the manner that was obvious to early Pentecostals.

A.C. Valdez states that the life of holiness is through “walking in the Spirit.” This illusive phrase explains the Pentecostal goal in terms of a daily communion and relationship with God. This would find connection with Thérèse, but only as she emphasised her times of intimate meditation. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit was not given the same importance as in Pentecostal groups.

### **9. Restorationist Piety**

The early Pentecostals, and many of the Holiness traditions before them, focused on a return to the first centuries of the Church, as has been labelled “Apostolic,” Restorationist or primitive Christianity. This drive to recover the ideals of the early Church was in some ways a pursuit of holiness. Although Thérèse sought to return to the original intent of the Carmelite Rule, there is no indication that she wished to recover the teachings and practices of the first two centuries.

### **10. Social Concern**

At the close of the nineteenth century, certain Catholic and Holiness groups placed an emphasis on caring for the poor. The movement of Liberal Piety, as I refer to it, in France, was seeking to bridge the gap to the working poor, along with the Salvation Army in the Holiness movement. In contrast to this, most of the early Pentecostals, with their pre-millennial eschatology, did not see the need to worry about social concerns. While Thérèse did not have this theological bias, because of her cultural limitations she was not concerned about the poor. Nevin rightly concludes that it was her cultural setting that hindered her from being concerned with social needs: “...love figures centrally in her reality but justice, humanly attempted, does not.”<sup>619</sup>

Although this would be the position of most early Pentecostals as well, Seymour most likely disagreed. The reason for this would have been his heritage as a black man and the son of slaves. Even before Seymour, black Holiness pastors were preaching that sanctification, freedom from sin and freedom from slavery were connected. The strength of this message amongst black American preachers is a clear contrast to the accepted class divisions present in nineteenth-century France. In order for Thérèse to have had so radical a social agenda in France, she would have had to enter active ministry to the poor and

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<sup>619</sup> Nevin, 50.



integrate that service into her “little way.” Only such a departure from the stereotypical attitude of the French *bourgeois* could have equalled the social message of Seymour.

### **11. Small Group Meetings**

Beginning during the Protestant Reformation, small group meetings have been a tool of every significant revival movement. The Tuesday prayer meetings of Phoebe Palmer were a small group that led to a revival. For Pentecostals, the same could be said of the small groups led by A.B. Simpson, the leader of the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA). Although it is possible to consider a convent a small group, the limited entrance and departure from the group make it, in reality, a community. A better example in the Catholic Church would be the use of small groups for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR). In this sense, small prayer groups are a fundamental building block of any renewal movement. Although not a part of the work of Thérèse, the value of small prayer groups can be seen in the CCR. The same can be said of the Pentecostal Church today, where most growing churches will also boast thriving home fellowships.

### **12. Missions**

Thérèse experienced a call to missions, but was unable to answer due to her declining health. Common ground could be found in that neither Seymour nor Thérèse became missionaries, but the function of Carmel, as primarily a place of prayer, meditation and intercession makes this more of a contrast.

Early Pentecostals believed that one’s gift of tongues was a call to missions. Hundreds of them followed a call to foreign countries in response. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit emphasised the role of the early Pentecostal Church as an eschatological movement, working to bring the return of Christ. Although the assumption that their gift of tongues would enable them to cross cultural boundaries without learning a language was incorrect, they nevertheless responded in droves to the call of missions.

### **13. Freedom from Oppression**

For blacks, freedom from sin and freedom from slavery were linked. This was the message preached in most black churches prior to the Civil War. During Seymour’s day, there was also a call for freedom from oppression amongst blacks, similar to the cry of the masses in nineteenth-century France. For hungry French workers, there was also a cry for freedom, but for the blacks, deliverance came from turning to God, while the poor in France turned away from God.

## **14. Eschatology**

Both Catholic and Pentecostal doctrine portray a strong picture of heaven, and the message of an imminent after-life motivated both Seymour and Thérèse. The contrast is in what they saw in the hereafter. Thérèse imagined and feared purgatory and imminent torment for the majority of Catholics, while Seymour imagined a life of bliss and intimate communion with God. For herself, Thérèse imagined a life of working in heaven and influencing God's decisions concerning her favourite people on earth. Some would say that she reduced the fears of purgatory through her message of love; no question. But purgatory is still supported by Catholic doctrine today, making fear rather than hope the primary eschatological motive for holiness.

### **I. CORE PIETY**

In Chapter 4, I suggested that there are three types of holiness or piety: Core, Culturally Related and Created. Although a subjective effort, following are selected elements of holiness for each of these categories, as seen in the lives of Seymour and Thérèse:

#### **1. Scripture**

For Thérèse, the re-emphasis on scripture was perhaps more innovative than for Seymour. As part of the tradition of American Holiness and Protestantism, scripture had been emphasised for centuries. The re-emphasis of scripture in Catholicism, made formal in Vatican II, is one of the elements I would label as Core Piety. Some modern traditions reject scripture as being manmade or irrelevant, but the value of revealed truth is foundational to living a holy Christian life.

#### **2. Prayer**

It is arguable that prayer, not scripture, should be the first aim in Core Piety. Yet, being a faithful Protestant, I see revealed truth as foundational to the invitation to pray. The value of prayer for Seymour and Thérèse has already been demonstrated. Prayer as communion and communication with God, relationship with the Creator of the universe, defines the starting place of a redeemed life and experiential holiness.

#### **3. Love**

Love of God followed by love of one's fellow man must come next in the hierarchy of Core Piety. Thérèse's message of love, although culturally conditioned, set the stage for changes that were to come in the Catholic Church. She learned late in her brief life that love for God was not enough; love must be given earthly expression to demonstrate one's "imitation of Christ." Seymour was thrust into



prominence during the Azusa Revival, with the theme of empowerment for witness. Yet, he personally withdrew from the extremes of power-hungry men and proclaimed love as the primary element of the Spirit-empowered life.

#### **4. The Fight for Justice**

Out of love comes a mandate in Christian holiness to fight against the social injustices in one's culture. Many early Pentecostals rejected Seymour's message of integrated worship based on a faulty eschatology. The Catholic Church in France sided against social justice, vying instead for power. Evangelicals have long emphasised regeneration of the individual as the path to change in society, thus ignoring social needs. In France, the Church viewed salvation of the nation as the goal and rejected pluralism in hopes of returning to the glory days of Monarchist Piety.

The Church cannot sacrifice its message of salvation through the cross of Christ, but by ignoring the plight of the oppressed it becomes irrelevant. In all cultures and nations, the Church must open its eyes to the disadvantaged, the voiceless, and respond with the compassion of Christ.

#### **5. Integrated Worship**

Seymour's vision of integrated worship, evidenced in the early months of Azusa, provides a picture of what holiness can be. For Seymour, this style of worship was made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. Many cultures in the world are deeply divided by racial hatred; thus the unification of races and classes is a great miracle of the Church and a true sign of holiness. Seen practically in few places today, the setting aside of racial, gender and class barriers is a picture of heaven here on earth.

Seymour's and Thérèse's message was available to all, but turning back the tide of racial hatred in any culture demands both a denunciation of racial discrimination and an empowerment of the supernatural to love those once despised. In my opinion, this is possible only through a divine work of regeneration and Spirit-enabled compassion. Dialogue is useful in opening the door to deal with inherited prejudices of the past and present, but only God's power can replace hate with love.

#### **6. An Inclusive Holiness**

Both the Pentecostal movement and Vatican II have re-emphasised the value of every Christian. The barriers between clergy and laity have been crushed but not destroyed. In this regard, I believe that Protestant churches have made more progress than Catholic churches. For example, the inclusion of women in ministry was a significant advance, as the Pentecostal message catapulted women in ministry to equal status with men in ministry. Although by comparison the number of men is far greater, the

credentialing of women continues to be a strong focus for most Pentecostal denominations in America. The same cannot be said, however, of the Pentecostal Church in Europe.

The Catholic Church continually rejects the credentialing of women based on its understanding of the priestly role. In my opinion, they must thoughtfully re-examine the role of the priest and the Lord's Supper in the light of scripture, not merely Church tradition, in order to surmount this impasse.

### **7. An Inclusive Sancity**

The Protestant definition of saint includes all baptised believers. The motive of early Protestants to reject saints was the result of the abuse of saints, and some such abuses still continue today. However, the rejection of Roman Catholic saints precludes the benefits of considering many great examples of holiness. Nonetheless, an honest recognition by some Catholic leaders concerning the lack of historical data for some saints brings hope that *rapprochement* (a coming together) is taking place between these two groups. Is it possible for Protestants to see in Catholic saints worthy examples for the Church? The fear that saints might usurp the place of Christ should be summarily rejected. For the realisation that all believers, both the living and the dead, are united by the blood of Christ should cause both groups to acknowledge the potential value of canonised saints as Christian examples.

## **J. CULTURALLY INFLUENCED PIETY**

### **1. Monasticism**

There are those in the Church who are called to a celibate life, and all Christians can be strengthened by ascetic practices. Yet, monasticism has created a life of its own, in my opinion, forcing an unhealthy separation from the world. A person isolated from culture cannot fulfil Christ's command to love one's brother. The response of the Catholic Church at Vatican II helped by recasting its open orders into a more effective service in the world, while the closed orders also continue to exist.

### **2. Physical Actions**

One element that caused great division in early Pentecostal churches was the influence of black culture on local church services. Dancing, swaying, shouting, and falling were a few of the physical manifestations. Some would suggest that these traditions were of African origin, but similar traditions in early American revivals refute this explanation. Although a source of lively debate, there is no question that these expressive movements were culturally influenced. Cultural influence here, however, does not deny categorically spiritual power.



### **3. Revival without Oppression?**

Martin Millner raises an important question, "Would Pentecostalism...have emerged without slave Christianity?"<sup>620</sup> Stated another way, was it the oppression of the black people which created the discontent amongst the poor thereby opening the door to the Azusa Revival? Would the revival have taken place without the cultural precondition of slavery in America? The same could be asked regarding Thérèse and her movement: Would the revival movement of Thérèse in France, and around the world, occurred without the class divide and oppression of the poor?

These questions may seem irrelevant as concerns Thérèse, since she was not part of the oppressed people. Throughout history, however, it is often the oppressed people who are open to change and accept the revolutionary words of a new message. The explosive growth of both of these movements would lead one to believe that the receptivity to the new message, whether Pentecostalism or the "little way," was prepared by the soil of discontent in the culture. Although not the subject of this thesis, it merits further study.

### **4. Exclusive History**

The question of origins has created a dilemma within the Pentecostal movement. Every group that has branched off of the Azusa Revival has tried to legitimise its movement or theology by pointing to its own history. White churches have typically looked to Parham, black churches to Seymour, as the founder of the movement. Certain leaders have looked to African traditions as the major influence in the movement or to Wesley or perhaps the Reformed Church. The challenge in every historical study of Pentecostalism is to make one's own historical setting the exclusive influence. Most branches of Pentecost acknowledge that the primary influence in Pentecostalism was the Holiness tradition and before that John Wesley, but it would be short-sighted to regard this as the only influence. Even though this thesis points to Thomas à Kempis as the primary influence of holiness for both Seymour and Thérèse, he cannot be viewed as the sole influence.

### **5. Racism**

The majority of Assemblies of God churches are made up of almost all-white congregations. This is a statement based on decades of personal experience, and supported by statistics, in my opinion, as the vast majority of AoG churches are not integrated. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort in certain regions of the United States to encourage ministry to other racial groups, but the majority of the

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<sup>620</sup> Millner, 555.

AoG churches remain predominantly white. Some of this can be attributed to demographics, since there are many large cities which would not have a completely white church. In all probability, many churches which started during the early years of the movement were founded on racial biases. The all-white constituency of many AoG churches has not changed perhaps because there has been no real effort or perceived need to do so. Though many pastors may want an integrated church, they simply do not know how to accomplish it or for some it is not even realistic in their demographic area. One must conclude that culture has influenced and continues to influence an ongoing racial division, and possibly an ongoing attitude of prejudice, in churches.

In this sense, the French Catholic Church has perhaps adjusted better to their cultural need. Obviously, a monarch would be ridiculous today, as it is no longer a viable option. In my opinion, the French Catholic Church, though not fully embracing the ideals of socialism, has unquestionably recognised the need to help the poor.

#### **6. Cultural Influence on the Supernatural**

Mr. Lee is registered as the first person to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the Los Angeles revival. He told Seymour that he had a vision of Peter and John shaking under the power of God and speaking in tongues. It is plausible that one's perspective of doctrine or practice can influence what one sees in dreams and visions. The same could be said of Thérèse, who saw the statue of Mary come to life on the day of her healing. I would suggest here that one's aspirations, based on one's theology or culture, may strongly influence one's experiences in dreams and visions. Does this mean that such are possibly not from God? One should carefully consider the importance of dreams in the supernatural realm, as they appear to be influenced by previously-held beliefs or thoughts.

Another example of cultural elements influencing the supernatural was in the life of Joan of Arc. Thérèse's two most influential saints (Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila) were also fabricated. One cannot help but wonder how the life of Joan of Arc would have been different had she known that her two greatest role models were the creation of Church tradition. Would she have put such trust in them and claimed them as her inspiration at her trial had she known they were not real? Concerning her visions of them, is it proof that they existed or is it only evidence that she was mentally disturbed? It is my view that neither of these conclusions is correct. The stories of invented or constructed saints illustrates how closely religious views are intertwined with one's culture. Invented saints were a construct required by a deep cultural need, which could also explain visions and dreams on a psychological level. This is not to say that



real visions and dreams do not exist, only that they should not be the final point of argument in historical matters. The human psyche can be quite impressionable.

## **7. Experiential Theology**

Both Seymour and Thérèse are connected in the idea of existential theology. Although Seymour would have claimed that the Bible was the final word in theology, in practice this was not the case. His disagreement with William Durham over the issue of sanctification caused him to use love as the deciding factor for theology. Seymour concluded that one could only be sure of another's theology based on the fruit of the Spirit and, in particular, love. Rather than addressing the rampant problem of racism in the culture, he chose to make theological decisions based on his experiences. We would all agree that love should be part of any mature Christian, but from an Evangelical perspective experience cannot be the determining factor on matters of doctrine. Interestingly, Seymour's appeal to love here brings him closer to Thérèse's theology.

Thérèse's life is replete with examples of experiential theology thus the cultural imprint is easy to recognise. For example, she bartered with God regarding Céline coming to the convent at Carmel, believing this proved her father had gone directly to heaven sans purgatory (the cultural imprint seen here was her assumption that her father would have otherwise had to go there). Existential theology and thus culture influenced the doctrines of both figures.

## **K. CONSTRUCTED PIETY**

### **1. Racism and Class Structure**

It is a difficult step to admit that one's doctrine or traditions are man-made, even more so to realise that they are not only without foundation theologically but also contrary to the central values of Christian holiness. Racism could be justified by certain statements in scripture, but in retrospect one finds in the New Testament an equalising of all peoples and recognition that every human being is of like value in God's sight. Racial discrimination and any theological attachment to it must therefore be rejected as a diabolical man-made construct.

Seymour, early in his ministry, rejected racism and division in general, whether based on race, gender or social class. The early meetings at Azusa support this; unfortunately, his view of a unified Church was rejected by those with the power to enact change on a wider scale.

Thérèse did not directly address the issue of race or class. Yet, by her example and message of the "little way" one can potentially understand how to remove these man-made barriers. She could have

chosen an elitist route as did Mother Marie de Gonzague, but instead she chose to remain with the novices and eventually trained them, ignoring the class structures of her day. While her message, available to all, crossed class and racial boundaries with its universal message of love, because Thérèse did not directly speak to these issues she cannot be seen in the same light as Seymour in this area.

## **2. Rigid Legalism**

In both Seymour and Thérèse one can point to a continuing influence of legalism. Seymour inherited many of his traditions from the Holiness movement: anti-tobacco, anti-alcohol and anti-amusement are examples. Thérèse inherited hers from tradition as well: rigid counting of acts of sacrifice became counting of acts of love. Counting comes from a theology of merit and a perspective of the Church in community rather than an individual quest. Regardless, both were trapped in practising legalistic holiness. Certain aspects of both of their customs are still found in the Pentecostal and Roman Catholic traditions. Most of these practices could be regarded as culturally influenced, but rigid legalism, in my opinion, is most often in opposition to true holiness and as such is counter-productive.

An analysis of the various legalistic traditions found on both sides would be a worthy study, especially with regard to those rigid views which have been rejected over time. Pentecostals continue to respond to a strong cultural influence in the areas of alcohol and tobacco, but now accept a variety of entertainment. An interesting contrast exists between American and European Pentecostals, especially regarding the use of alcohol. The Roman Church has moved strongly in the direction of love through the work of sisters around the world. The compassion ministries of various Catholic organisations bring a kindly touch to those in need and lessen some of the legalism of past generations.

## **3. External Actions of Holiness with No Concordance of Heart**

The writings of both Seymour and Thérèse reveal external actions lacking internal similtude. Seymour complained about and eventually rejected the doctrine of biblical evidence because he had seen some Christians' lack of godly character. One could illustrate the same in Thérèse's life, when she repeated actions of love for sisters she really did not love at all. Although at times one must "do the right thing," it is hypocritical to continue to operate on this level with no accord of the heart. It also goes against the premise that one's intentions are essential to true holiness, as evidenced in Taylor and à Kempis.



# CONCLUSION

The results of this study are many, but the most significant are two-fold. First, a close connection in views of holiness, encompassing many areas, has been demonstrated between our two principle figures, William J. Seymour and Thérèse of Lisieux. Second, a close reliance on the work of Thomas à Kempis has been illustrated in both of their lives. For Thérèse, one can see a direct dependence, while for Seymour it is a connection through the Holiness tradition to the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, whose direct reliance on Thomas à Kempis was readily established. What, then, should one conclude?

The most important conclusion of this work is to recognise that the practices of holiness, as seen in personal consecration, are trans-denominational and trans-cultural. Theology and culture always have an impact on one's view of piety, but the core elements find similar expression. In fact, though the individual traditions and culture of Seymour and Thérèse should ostensibly drive them apart, their quest for holiness draws them together. Thus the desire to be holy is a unifying factor in the Church. Where theology and culture divide, the pursuit of holiness, inspired by the Holy Spirit, unites.

In many ways, expressions of piety are supra-denominational or extra-theological.<sup>621</sup> A prayer offered by a Roman Catholic, Baptist or Pentecostal may be more an expression of holiness than of theology. Hands raised in worship are an expression of spiritual surrender, whether a Catholic or a Pentecostal. In many respects, piety is a reflection of one's heart and transcends theology. Pentecostal theologians will always raise questions of legitimacy concerning Charismatic experiences within other faiths: How can this group, adhering to a theology rife with errors, be blessed by God's Holy Spirit in the same manner that we have been? Likewise, Catholics could raise this question in reference to Pentecostals.

How is it possible that the gifts of the Holy Spirit now function not just in churches with a classical Pentecostal doctrine, but also in churches with an almost anti-Pentecostal doctrine, as well as in the Catholic Church with its anti-Protestant doctrine? The answer frustrates theologians who want to be "right" in their theology thereby making everyone else "wrong." Either one is 100 percent correct in his theology, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit which are taking place in divergent groups are fake or illegitimate. Of course, there is also another option: that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not bound by theology.

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<sup>621</sup> One might even say that the expressions of holiness are supra-religious, meaning not bound to Christianity. Support could be found for this statement, but Christian holiness is the subject of this work.

The Pentecostal camp would like to believe that their experience of tongues and long history of the gifts is God's stamp of approval on their theology (experiential theology). I would suggest, however, that the gifts of the Spirit being poured out are a sign of God's desire for renewal in all of His Church. I would further add that it is a sign that He is less concerned about doctrine than a heart that follows closely after Him—that holiness and renewal are more important than theology.

Does this mean that one's beliefs are unimportant? Absolutely not; one can see in the Charismatic renewal—which continues to cross all denominational boundaries—that God is looking for those who hunger after Him. And He is rewarding them with the blessing of His Holy Spirit: "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:12 NIV)

In reality, flawed beliefs can be a great hindrance to the work of God. The doctrinal rigidity of the Assemblies of God in this area has hindered its growth during at least the past two decades, while the Charismatic Church at large has continued to expand in America. Had there been more acceptance of other Charismatic expressions I believe that today the Assemblies of God would be the largest Pentecostal denomination in the United States. While my own denomination, the Assemblies of God, is known for its openness to the Holy Spirit, doctrinal inflexibility may be unwittingly limiting the move of the Spirit in much the same way as in recent years of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR).

As regards the CCR, my most significant critique is the attempt by Catholic hierarchy to more or less force the working of the Holy Spirit to adhere to traditional doctrinal structures within the Catholic Church. Instead of permitting the Spirit to have the freedom to influence change in some of the Church's traditions, the Church has tried to push its traditions and doctrines on the renewal movement. In my opinion, this is one of the reasons the CCR has not experienced sustained growth.

Who would rather have a movement that is restricted by tradition than one enlivened and filled with hope by the Holy Spirit? This hunger for God is demonstrated in the comments of the Pope at his visit to Lisieux in 1980 who, speaking to a crowd of 100,000 declared:

De Thérèse de Lisieux, on peut dire avec conviction que l'Esprit de Dieu a permis à son cœur de révéler directement aux hommes de notre temps le mystère fondamental, la réalité fondamentale de l'Evangile : le fait d'avoir reçu réellement 'un esprit de fils adoptifs qui nous fait nous écrier : Abba ! Père !' La 'petite voie' est la voie de la 'sainte enfance'...Quelle vérité du message évangélique est en effet plus fondamentale et plus universelle que celle-ci Dieu est notre Père et nous sommes ses enfants ?<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>622</sup> Guy Gaucher. *Histoire d'Une Vie: Thérèse Martin*, 233-234.



The fact that we are the “children” of God is what should motivate the heart of every believer to desire to become more like our Father through the example of Christ’s holiness:

Be sorry for the following: that you are so carnal and worldly, that your passions are still unmortified, and that you are so filled with evil desires;  
so unguarded in your external senses and so frequently occupied with foolish fantasies;  
so interested in worldly affairs and so indifferent about the interior life;  
so quick for laughter and dissipation, but so averse to tears and sorrow;  
so ready for relaxation and bodily comfort, but so sluggish to practice penance and devotion;  
so eager to hear the latest news and to visit interesting places, but so slow in embracing what is humble and poor;  
so desirous to have many possessions, but so miserly in giving and so tenacious in retaining...<sup>623</sup>

The above quotation is excerpted from Book IV, Chapter 7, of *The Imitation*. Despite the many important insights brought by the Reformation, the heart of man has remained the same. Cutting across all theological and cultural boundaries, as well as the sophistication of modern and post-modern thinking, to the heart of Christianity, Thomas à Kempis’ words admonish us today, five centuries later, perhaps more than ever before, the same à Kempis who is behind so much of how two “saints” thought and lived.

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<sup>623</sup> Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation*, 1998, 193.

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